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AUTHOR Kogan, Deborah; And Others
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ABSTRACT

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) programs impart job-related skills to economically disadvantaged individuals to improve both their immediate post-program employment and their long-term employment potential. To assess the quality of the training currently provided under JTPA, a study looked at program designs and service delivery practices in 15 randomly selected Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) around the country during 1988 and reviewed the training received by adult participants in 43 different occupational training programs. The objectives of the study were as follows: (1) develop and test operational criteria for assessing JTPA training; (2) identify current JTPA policies, service designs, and implementation procedures, and other long-term training and employability goals; and (3) make recommendations to strengthen the quality of programs and outcomes. Three different stages in the service delivery process were identified: (1) client selection and matching to services; (2) provision of job-relevant instruction; and (3) job development and placement process. Principal findings address SDA practices, classroom training, and on-the-job training. (Seventeen recommendations and 15 references and 3 appendices are included. Three appendixes consists of: (1) criteria indicating quality training; (2) matrix of study topics by data sources; and (3) summary of progress design features oriented to hard-to-serve clients.) (NLA)

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Improving the Quality Of Training Under JTPA

Research and Evaluation Report Series 91-A

U.S. Department of Labor
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1991

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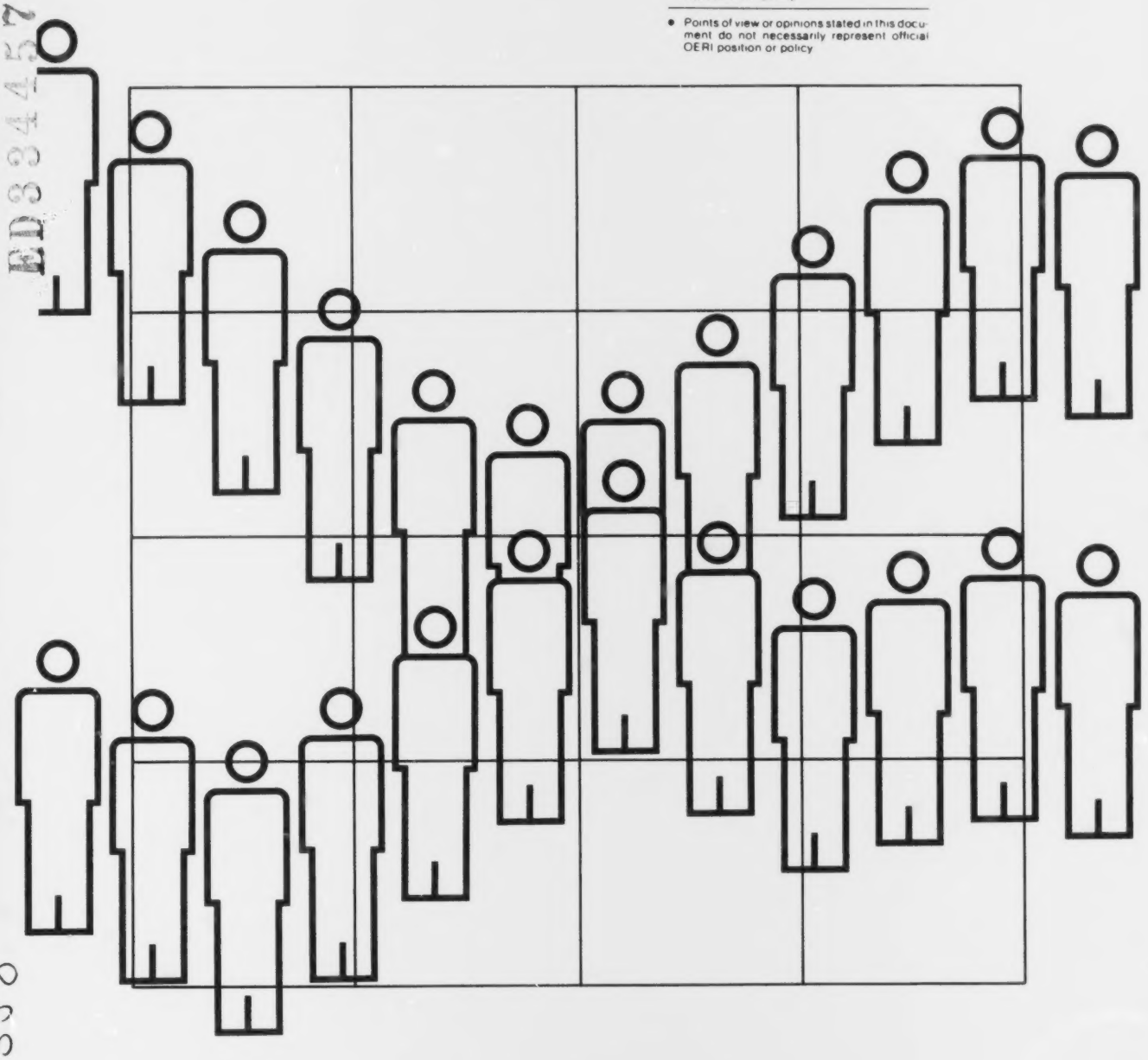

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Improving the Quality Of Training Under JTPA

Research and Evaluation Report Series 91-A

U.S. Department of Labor
Lynn Martin, Secretary

Employment and Training Administration
Roberts T. Jones, Assistant Secretary
for Employment and Training

Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Development
Raymond J. Uhalde, Administrator

1991

Research and Evaluation Project Series

The Research and Evaluation Project Series presents information about and outcomes of projects funded by the Office of Strategic Planning and Policy Development (OSPPD) of the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. OSPPD's research and evaluation program deals with a wide range of training, employment, workplace literacy, labor market, and related issues.

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Authors of this report were Deborah Kogan and Katherine Dickinson, co-principal investigators; Barbara Means, senior cognitive scientist, and Marlene Strong, project director. In addition to them, the research team for the project consisted of Catherine Casserly, David Drury, Ginette Geer, John Lederer, Laura Schlichtmann, and Deborah Shaver.

PREFACE

The members of the research team would like to thank our Project Officer at the U.S. Department of Labor, David Lah, for his encouragement and support throughout this project. We also thank the staff in the DOL Regional Offices for their cooperation and assistance in arranging the visits to the individual SDAs in their regions. Most importantly, however, we want to express our gratitude to the SDA and service provider staff who enabled us to observe their programs, and who talked with us at length about how they had designed and implemented their programs to meet the needs of clients in their local service areas. We also thank the former JTPA trainees who shared their training and post-training experiences with us and discussed how well JTPA training had prepared them for their jobs. Finally, we thank the employers in each local community, who talked with us about how well the JTPA trainees met their needs for skilled employees.

In conducting this assessment of the quality of JTPA training, we promised our respondents in the 15 SDAs we visited and the 43 training activities we selected for study that their programs would not be described by name in this report. This decision was made so that they would feel comfortable sharing with us the weaknesses of their programs as well as their strengths. Our intention has been to use the experiences of the SDAs we studied as case examples illustrating themes that are representative of the quality of JTPA training across the nation.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TRAINING UNDER JTPA

INTRODUCTION

JTPA training is intended to impart job-related skills to economically disadvantaged individuals to improve both their immediate post-program employment and their long-term employment potential. Some observers of JTPA job training programs have argued that the system places too much emphasis on short-term training for entry-level jobs, and not enough emphasis on services that will enable participants to obtain "quality" jobs with potential for career advancement. To assess the quality of the training currently provided under JTPA, this study took a close look at the program designs and service delivery practices in 15 randomly-selected SDAs around the country during Program Year 1988, and reviewed the Title II-A training received by adult participants in 43 different occupational training programs.

The objectives of the study were:

- to develop and test operational criteria for assessing the quality of JTPA training at both the system and the service provider levels;
- to identify the strengths and weaknesses of current JTPA policies, service designs, and implementation procedures, and to identify features of the JTPA system that are making it difficult to further JTPA long-term training and employability goals; and
- to make recommendations about how to strengthen the quality of JTPA programs and outcomes at the national, state, and SDA levels through revised statements of programs goals, innovative program designs, and improved operational practices.

The concept of "quality training" used during this study was operationalized by developing criteria for the adequacy of services provided to participants during three different stages in the services delivery process. The first stage of the training process consists of client selection and matching to services. Criteria for quality training during the participant selection process include: whether (1) the SDA had clear goals about how to target services to particular groups within the JTPA eligible population, and offered services that were appropriate to the needs of the targeted groups; (2) the SDA or service provider used sufficient assessment procedures to determine the type of training that was most appropriate for each applicant; (3) service planning procedures ensured that the trainee would receive a comprehensive package of services sufficient to overcome all employability barriers; and (4) enrolled individuals were sufficiently prepared to successfully complete each training component.

The second stage of the training process is the provision of job-relevant instruction, either by an instructor in a classroom setting or in an on-the-job setting. Criteria for the provision of quality training include concerns about the clarity of the training objectives, the design of the curriculum, and the instructional techniques. The third stage of the training process is the job development and placement process. During this stage, criteria for quality service provision include concerns about whether the job obtained takes advantage of the full range of skills imparted during training, the participant has the skills needed to perform the job, and the jobs obtained after training are different from those the participant would have otherwise obtained, in terms of career advancement potential, wage level, and availability of fringe benefits.

PRINCIPAL FINDINGS

SDA Practices

Client Targeting

We found that SDAs do not often establish formal target groups within the JTPA-eligible population. When client targeting goals do exist, they most often designate at-risk youth. Only four of the 15 case study SDAs designated priority groups among JTPA-eligible adults. Of these four, two developed service designs that were appropriate for the needs of the targeted hard-to-serve groups, but two had service designs that did not adequately address the needs of the targeted groups. Thus, the official designation of priority target groups appears to be an insufficient indicator of whether an SDA has undertaken a strategic planning process to identify local groups in need of JTPA services and to design services to meet those needs.

Client Assessment

Assessment procedures were subjective in one-third of the SDAs studied, consisting of brief face-to-face interviews with SDA intake counselors; formal testing in these SDAs was usually limited to a short reading test to fulfill the federal reporting requirement, and its results were not used by the counselors. Subjective assessments led to mismatches between the abilities of applicants and the skills needed to succeed in skills training. Nearly half of the SDAs studied used objective assessments of basic skills to make appropriate referrals. However, few give applicants the opportunity to explore occupational interests or aptitudes during the assessment process. The lack of detailed information about vocational aptitudes and employment histories is reflected in the sparseness of most Employability Development Plans (EDPs), which are usually brief standardized forms listing the services to which the client was referred. However, some SDAs developed more extensive EDPs that did provide the basis for case management activities by SDA or service provider staff.

Service Packages

Most SDAs provided a wide range of services, including basic skills training, classroom occupational skills training, on-the-job skills training, and pre-employment training. However, the full range of services was not always available to hard-to-serve clients (i.e., those with basic skills deficiencies or poor work histories), and the lack of supportive services made it difficult for many participants to participate in training. About a quarter of the SDAs studied provided few or no occupational skills training options for hard-to-serve clients. A third of the SDAs provided little or no financial assistance to participants for living expenses, transportation expenses, or child care costs while in training; in these SDAs, clients must have support from some other source in order to participate in training.

Supervision of Service Provider Practices

SDAs often use outside contractors for the actual provision of training to participants and job placement at the end of training. While SDAs usually took steps to ensure that training was taking place in demand occupations, only a third of the SDAs were actively involved in designing training programs for JTPA participants. In the remaining SDAs, the dominant mode of operating occupational classroom training was individual referral to existing training programs.

SDAs monitored the quality of service provider instructional and placement services using relatively narrow criteria. Generally, as long as the service providers met their performance objectives (for placement rates and wage rates), the SDAs did not examine their instructional methods, training content, or placement practices. Little attention was paid to whether jobs obtained by participants offered fringe benefits, opportunities for advancement, or working conditions satisfactory to the client.

Classroom Training

The SDA site visits included observations and interviews at 22 classroom training programs, offering training in a wide range of occupational areas, including computer clerical/data entry/bookkeeping, electronics assembly, auto maintenance, and building/carpentry. The programs ranged from three weeks to two years in length and from $100 to $5,000 in cost per trainee; the mean program duration was 623 hours and the mean cost was $2,045 per client.

Quality of Classroom Training Practices

The classroom training programs in our sample appeared strong in terms of several of the dimensions in our model of quality training. The occupational relevance of the content being taught was generally high (75% of programs). In addition, most programs made considerable use of practical exercises for skills learning, an instructional strategy that helps to promote active learning and transfer of learned skills to the workplace. There was, however, a small group of programs

that consisted mostly of lectures. Based on observations of sample classes, 50% of the programs were judged to be good in terms of promoting active learning, while 20% were judged poor.

All of the programs used some systematic assessment of student achievement. Nearly two-thirds included practical (hands-on) exercises in their assessment procedures. One-third used written tests only.

On the other hand, the programs were weak in terms of two dimensions in model of quality training: clarity of objectives and integration of basic and occupational skills. Only one program provided us with a competency-based description of its curriculum. Most programs described their content in terms of broad topics that the instructor would cover rather than in terms of skills that students would acquire. There was some evidence that unclearly stated objectives led to misunderstandings by participants concerning the content of courses.

Despite the basic skills deficiencies of many JTPA participants, few occupational programs included a significant basic skills component. While 59% of the programs included some basic skills, only two of these devoted 20% or more of their class time to basic skills. Nine programs included at least some basic skills in the same classes as occupational skills, but the two were not necessarily well integrated. Only three programs included any kind of literacy skills training in the same classes in which occupational content was taught.

Six of the 22 programs were judged to be of high quality overall; these programs were more likely to be run by proprietary schools and to be more expensive than other programs.

Quality of Classroom Training Outcomes

For each training program visited, we attempted to contact three former participants and their employers, to ascertain the type of jobs participants had obtained after training, their experience in the job over the 6-12 months since leaving training, and their satisfaction with the program; employers were interviewed concerning the appropriateness of the curriculum used in the training program and the quality of program graduates. Over 60% of the employers contacted said they were quite satisfied with the classroom training programs; no employer expressed a strong negative opinion about any program as a whole.

A summary subjective judgment of job quality was made for each former participant contacted, based on wage level, job skill requirements, and advancement relative to the participant's past employment. Only about half of the jobs obtained after classroom training were high-quality placements. While a significant proportion were "training-related," many were not at the level initially anticipated by the client nor at the level trained for. In some cases participants were placed in the first job that came along, rather than a job that fully used their training, due to the eagerness of providers to place participants in order to earn the full fixed unit price allowed under their contracts; these participants were either "underplaced," or

"overtrained" for the jobs they obtained. The quality of the outcomes experienced by participants was related to the quality of the instruction in the programs: of the six programs highly rated in terms of the instructional quality variables, half placed a majority of the past participants we sampled in quality jobs, compared to just a quarter of the other programs.

On-the-Job Training

The analysis of OJT was based on 93 individual examples of current (38 participants) and past (55 participants) OJT positions from the 14 case study SDAs that provided OJT services. For current positions, visits were made to the OJT worksites, where the participant and the supervisor/employer were interviewed; for past positions, telephone interviews were conducted with the participant and/or employer.

SDA Philosophy

SDAs varied widely in their view of the purpose of OJT. All SDAs had strong expectations that OJT jobs would continue after the OJT contracts ended. However, five SDAs did not view the purpose of OJT as providing training in new skills. These SDAs tended to view OJT services as "bribes" to employers to hire the disadvantaged. Five other SDAs clearly viewed the purpose of OJT as providing training, but did not explicitly set out the goal that the subsidy should increase the participant's access to training over what they could find on their own. The remaining four SDAs had the most fully developed sense of the potential of OJT as a training activity: they viewed it as compensation to employers for providing training to individuals they ordinarily would not have hired.

Quality of Match to Participants' Needs

OJT contracts were examined along four dimensions to assess the quality of the match between the participant's needs and the job: whether the job was matched to the participant's occupational interests; whether the working conditions were appropriate for the participant's needs; whether the wage rate was appropriate to the participant's needs and previous experience; and whether the job provided training in skills the participant needed to upgrade. Overall, 15% of the OJT contracts were judged to be high quality matches on all four dimensions and an additional 15% were well matched on three dimensions.

In SDAs that assessed OJT participants' occupational interests and abilities, the quality of match was substantially higher than in the nine SDAs that did not assess occupational interests. SDAs that provided OJT services directly had more high quality matches than SDAs that contracted OJT services to service providers. In SDAs that viewed OJT as "bribes" to hire the disadvantaged rather than as a way of providing needed training, only 15% of the OJT contracts were well matched on at least three dimensions. "Reverse referrals" -- i.e., when employers refer individuals they plan to hire to JTPA to get a subsidy -- were less well matched to participants' needs and interests.

Quality of Training in OJT Jobs

While it was not expected that OJT positions would have developed curricula in the same way that classroom training programs had, nevertheless, the same general principles apply: the training should have clear objectives, should follow a logical order, be matched to the learner's level, and should be in job-relevant skills that are transferable to similar jobs with other employers. In addition, the participants should be trained by someone at the worksite, either through expert demonstration or by being observed and corrected while working, rather than simply being expected to do the job on their own. We assessed the OJT positions on all of these dimensions.

Approximately 30% of OJT contracts were for jobs where the participant received little interactive training, learning few if any transferable skills. We judged that these contracts offered poor quality training. Approximately 25% of the OJT contracts were for jobs where the participant received little interactive training but acquired a moderate to high degree of transferable skills. In these cases, the quality of training was not good, but the participant was learning skills. The remaining 45% of OJT contracts were for jobs with moderate or high amounts of interactive training, where the participant was learning a moderate or high amount of transferable skills. These contracts were judged to provide high quality training and substantial skills.

There was a relationship between the quality of training and SDA practices. In SDAs that monitored OJT contracts during the training period, 60% provided high quality training, compared to only 10% in the SDAs that did not monitor OJT contracts. In SDAs that viewed OJT payments as bribes to employers, over 50% of the OJT contracts provided poor quality training, compared to only 20% of the contracts in other SDAs.

Increasing Access to Training

Based on our discussions with clients and employers, and on our review of the case records, we made a subjective assessment of whether the OJT subsidy increased the participant's access to training, or whether the individual was likely to find a similar job on his or her own without the subsidy. In only 25% of the OJT cases was there evidence that the subsidy had substantially increased participants' access to training. In 30% of the cases, we saw evidence that the OJT subsidy had not appreciably influenced participants' opportunities. There were three main reasons for this assessment: in some cases the employer told us explicitly that the subsidy made no difference in his or her decision to hire the individual. In others, the participant already had substantial experience in the training occupation and nothing had changed to make him or her less employable. In the third kind of case, the job involved minimal training and the participant had qualifications similar to other employees.

Quality of OJT Outcomes

Of the former OJT participants we contacted, only half of the OJT participants were still working for their OJT employer. Over 80% of the former participants whose OJT contracts were judged to be good matches to participants' needs on at least three dimensions were still employed with their OJT employer, compared to 40% of those less well matched. The vast majority (87%) of the employed terminees were earning more than their OJT wage rate: about half had received raises of $0.50 per hour or more. Nearly two-thirds were receiving benefits. About 40% rated the stability of their job as good, while only 20% rated their possibility for advancement as good.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations for improving the quality of JTPA training have been organized into two groups: actions that can be undertaken at the federal and state levels to provide policy direction and leadership, and actions that require changes in policies and practices at the SDA and service provider levels. Some of the recommendations suggested below are intended to improve the overall effectiveness of JTPA training for all participants; other recommendations focus on how to improve the effectiveness of JTPA training for hard-to-serve groups. These recommendations are examined in detail in Chapter 5.

Federal and State Roles in Improving the Quality of Training

1. Help clarify the purpose of on-the-job training.

2. Clarify program priorities regarding the emphasis to be placed on serving hard-to-serve individuals through the JTPA program.

3. Promote the design of service packages that are responsive to the needs of hard-to-serve groups.

4. Promote integrated linkages between JTPA training and work programs for welfare recipients.

SDA and Service Provider Roles in Improving the Quality of Training

Recommendations to Improve SDA System-Level Functions

1. Assess basic skills using detailed objective measures during intake into JTPA services.

2. Assess vocational interest and vocational aptitudes and help applicants explore career options.

3. Provide pre-employment services as part of a comprehensive service package, especially for individuals with limited employment experience or unstable work histories.

4. Promote use of case management techniques, particularly for JTPA participants in long training programs, or participants receiving several services to address multiple employment barriers.

Recommendations to Improve the Design and Delivery of Classroom Training

5. Use JTPA dollars to actively shape the design of local training programs to be more responsive to the needs of JTPA participants.

6. Encourage service providers to develop and offer training options that integrate basic skills training and occupational training.

7. Review the realism of each program's occupational goals and the relevance of its curriculum given the local labor market.

8. Review the validity of program entrance requirements.

9. Require classroom training providers to submit a comprehensive skill-based set of curriculum objectives.

10. Monitor classroom instruction to check on the appropriateness of methods used and the quality of instruction.

11. Pay more attention to the appropriateness of the placements being made at the conclusion of occupational classroom training.

Recommendations to Improve the Design and Implementation of On-the-Job Training

12. Clarify the purpose of OJT contracts to service providers as well as employers.

13. Do not encourage employer-initiated reverse referrals for OJT positions.

14. Specify the skills to be learned in the OJT contract.

15. Link the terms of OJT contracts to characteristics of participants and jobs.

16. Take a more active role in shaping the content of OJT training.

17. Monitor the progress of OJT contracts, preferably through on-site visits.

I. ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF JTPA TRAINING: STUDY DESIGN AND METHODS

INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUES AND SUMMARY OF STUDY OBJECTIVES

The objective of JTPA training is to impart job-related skills to program participants in order to improve both their immediate post-program employment and their long-term employment potential. Some observers of JTPA job training programs have argued that the system places too much emphasis on short term training for entry-level jobs, and not enough emphasis on services that will produce "quality" jobs in the short run, and increased employability in the long run. This study examines the extent to which training economically disadvantaged workers for better jobs is possible within the JTPA system, and makes recommendations about how the quality of JTPA training and the quality of jobs obtained by JTPA trainees can be improved.

The planning, programming and management decisions that most directly affect quality of training are those taken by SDAs. In implementing local programs under JTPA, service delivery areas must deal with multiple and sometimes contradictory goals. For example, most SDAs face a constant "creative tension" between:

- Reaching individuals who are really in need of employment and training services, and reaching individuals who can benefit from the services and achieve a successful outcome;

- Addressing the needs of individuals who have basic educational deficiencies, and preparing individuals for jobs that meet the needs of employers for more highly skilled workers;

- Making limited program dollars reach as large a number of participants as possible and providing some individuals

with the intensive intervention they need before becoming employable;

- Helping individuals with severe employment barriers achieve a modest advance in employment and earnings, and trying to "look good" on the performance standards by achieving mean performance levels that are as high as possible.

As a consequence, most SDAs are consciously trying to achieve a delicate balance: they are trying to further program goals that are pulling them in different directions. The differing goals and practices regarding designing and implementing training programs reflect different balancing points on these tensions, as well as different levels of potential for placing individuals in "higher level" jobs resulting from varying characteristics of the eligible population and differing local labor market conditions.

Critics of the current configuration of JTPA services claim that a healthy balance has not been achieved; that SDAs and JTPA service providers have settled for "looking good" on the performance standards or meeting minimally acceptable program goals by taking the easy way out in terms of the individuals selected for service and the range of services provided. Among the possible weaknesses that have been identified are the following:

- On-the-job training may be operating in some places as a financial subsidy to an employer to hire a JTPA-eligible individual over another job applicant, without actually increasing the skills of the trainee during the period of supposed training.

- OJT placements and other placements made by the JTPA system may not be placing sufficient emphasis on the achievement of jobs that represent opportunities for career advancement and a road to stable employment in the

future offering the trainee the opportunity to fully support his or her family.

- Basic skills training may not be provided at all, or not in a way that enables individuals needing basic skills remediation to access "higher level jobs" at the completion of JTPA participation.

- The various types of other training activities provided under JTPA may not be as effective as possible in enhancing the long-term employability of the participants and/or in linking individuals into the labor market opportunities in their local area that offer the best opportunities for a stable employment future.

One way of summarizing the criticisms that have been leveled at the JTPA program is that the current set of performance standards and other program regulations have caused SDAs to emphasize the quantity of placements that they are achieving at the expense of the quality of the placements.

Emphasis on the objective of placing individuals into quality jobs -- as measured by absolute earnings level, working conditions, fringe benefits, stability of employment, and opportunities for advancement -- is essential to the JTPA system for several reasons:

- First, JTPA depends on being able to attract applicants who feel they have something to gain from program participation in terms of the employment that will be available to them after they complete training.

- Second, if local JTPA programs are attempting to target welfare recipients, they have to offer employment with wages and benefits that are as attractive as the package of social welfare benefits available to AFDC recipients in that locality.

- Third, the JTPA program is attempting to create positive net impacts: to assist individuals to obtain employment that is better than the jobs they would have been able to obtain in the absence of participating in training.

- Fourth, in order to have a positive net impact on participants that justifies the public investment in employment and training services, JTPA must have an ongoing effect on the employment experiences of its trainees beyond an initial three months of employment.

The objectives of this study have been:

- to create a conceptual model of the quality of JTPA training that identifies both system-level and client-level criteria for assessing whether quality training and quality outcomes are occurring;

- to operationalize the criteria for the quality of JTPA training through the development of a qualitative research design that can be applied during on-site visits to a limited number of SDAs and their service providers;

- to assess the quality of JTPA training in local service systems through conducting site visits to 15 SDAs throughout the United States to determine the extent to which training is furthering the goal of increasing the long-term employability of program participants; and

- to develop conclusions about the strengths and weaknesses of current JTPA policies, services designs, and implementation procedures and to identify features of the JTPA system that are currently making it difficult for SDAs to use training to further long-term employability goals; and

- to make recommendations about how to strengthen the quality of JTPA programs and outcomes at the national, state or SDA levels through creative programming and operational practices, or revised statements of program goals.

The remainder of this chapter summarizes the conceptual model of the quality of training developed for this study, and describes how this model guided the design of the study methodology. The next section presents the client-level and system-level models of quality of training. The third section presents the proposed criteria for assessing whether quality training is being provided in a specific SDA or by a particular service provider. We next summarize the sample design used in selecting 15 SDAs and 45 training curricula for examination during on-site field investigations. Finally, we describe the site visit methods, including the different respondents with whom discussions were held, the observations that were made of program operations, and the written materials that were reviewed on site.

CLIENT-LEVEL AND SYSTEM-LEVEL MODELS OF QUALITY TRAINING

In the training model developed for this study, the definitions of "quality training" and "quality jobs" are not absolute: they result from a three-way match between the skills deficiencies of the participants, the skills taught in a particular training program, and the skills requirements of demand occupations in a particular local labor market. That is, quality training occurs when the JTPA program assists a trainee to achieve the skills that will enable him or her to meet the performance expectations of a local employer who is looking for workers in the occupational area selected by the participant for training. Quality training must result in a match between the labor market needs of the employer and the employability skills of the JTPA trainee.

A Client-Level Model of Quality Training

The conceptual framework for this study is based on models of quality training that are grounded in the extensive literature on vocational training. In the client-level model, illustrated in Figure I-1, there are three processes that operate to enable potential participants to obtain quality jobs: **the enrollment process, the training process and the placement process.**

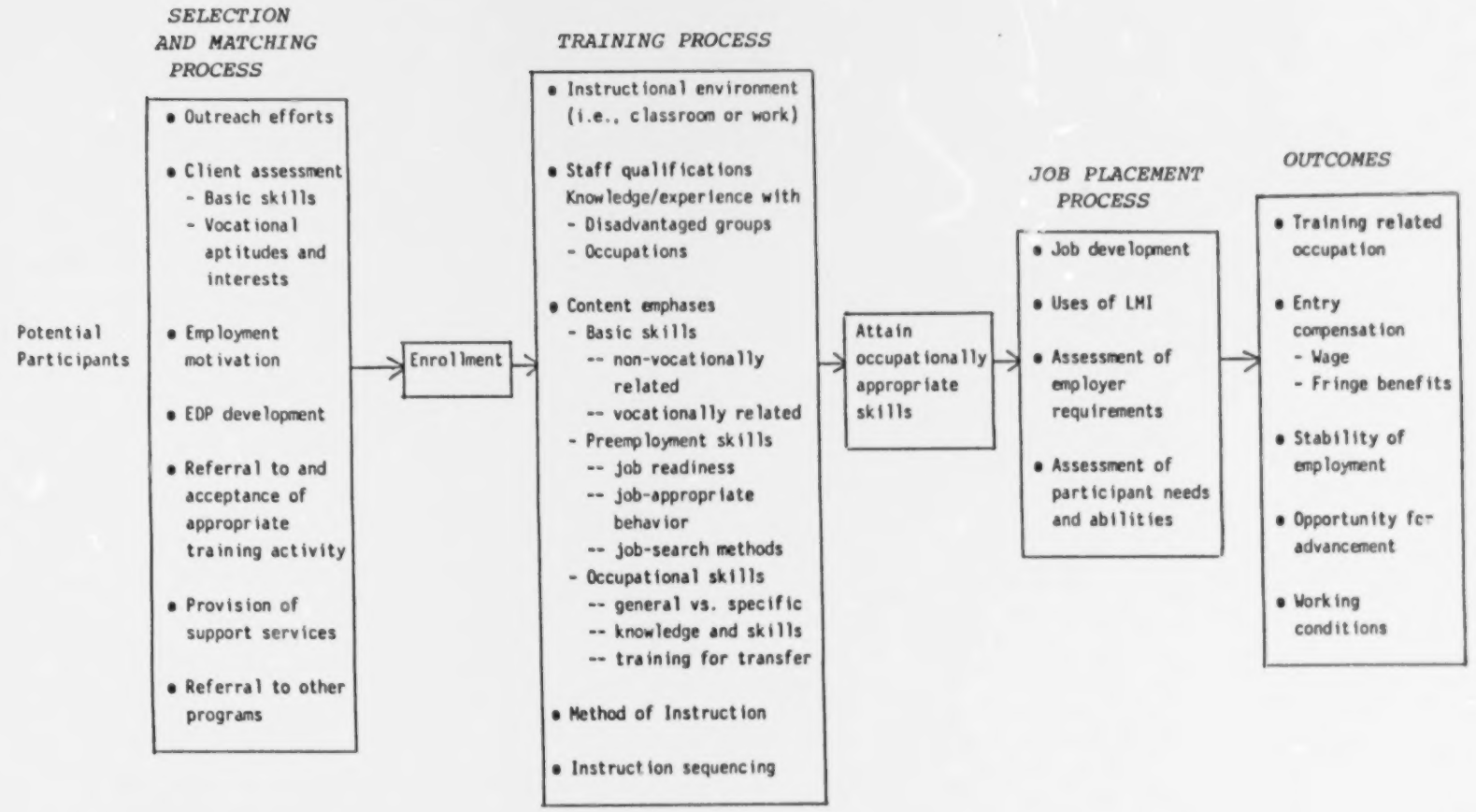
Figure I-1 depicts how individuals flow through JTPA services in a given SDA or training project. Although the quality of the training process itself is one important focus of the study, the model also highlights the importance of the flow of potential participants into the training program and the placement of participants into jobs, in addition to the training that imparts skills and knowledge to those participants.

In terms of training content, perhaps the major concern in employment training research is that the content of participants' training must be **transferable** to the specific jobs for which they are being trained (and, if possible, to a broader range of occupations). High quality training is not only training that starts with the participants' current knowledge and skills and builds additional knowledge about and skills for jobs in a certain field; it is also training that enables participants to know when to apply the knowledge and skills they have gained. Training programs fulfilling these quality criteria are most likely to fill the needs of employers for skilled and reliable employees.

The content of the training program is not the only dimension of quality; the training must also be useful to the trainee. Thus, quality training programs are "those that offer participants training for jobs likely to be available, worth having (on the basis of compensation; status, likelihood of advancement, etc.) and that might not be attainable without training." (U.S. Department of Education, 1988)

Figure I-1

Client-Level Model of Quality Training



Thus, as the model makes clear, training must be appropriate along two dimensions in order to be "quality training." First, it must be appropriate to the needs of participants; it must overcome their specific barriers to employment and provide them with capabilities to perform well-paying jobs. Second, it must be appropriate to the needs of employers for workers who can fulfill the requirements of the jobs available in the local labor market. The quality of training programs is judged by the appropriateness of the match of training program design to the participants' needs and to the nature of the jobs for which the participants are being prepared.

The quality of the training match between participants' skills deficiencies and employers' needs, in turn, depends on whether there was an appropriate match at other points in the process shown in Figure I-1 -- the participant selection process and the job placement process. Concerns during the participant selection process include (1) whether the SDA or service provider used sufficient assessment procedures to determine what type of training was the most appropriate training service for that applicant; (2) whether service planning procedures ensured that the trainee would receive a comprehensive package of services sufficient to overcome all employability barriers; and (3) whether recruitment and selection practices resulted in the enrollment of individuals in each training program who had sufficient preparation to be able to successfully complete the course curriculum.

Concerns during the job placement process include (1) whether the job takes advantage of the full range of skills imparted during skills training, or whether some other job might more fully utilize the job seeker's skills; (2) whether the job developer made an attempt to match the job seeker to the particular type of job he or she preferred, rather than simply making the first available placement; and (3) whether the job offers advantages over other jobs that the trainee could have obtained "off the street" in terms of career advancement potential, current wage level, or fringe benefit package.

A System-Level Model of Quality Training

The conceptual framework for the study also includes a system-level model of SDA design decisions that lead to quality program services and the factors that influence these decisions. Figure I-2 displays a model of the system level components of SDAs' local programs that influence the client level training process. Assessing the quality of the actual training programs being provided under existing JTPA programs is a critical part of the proposed project. However, it is also essential to understand why SDAs have chosen specific program designs that affect the quality of the training provided. In the proposed study, we will also determine the factors that influenced SDAs to design their programs as they do, factors that enhanced SDAs' ability to design effective programs, and factors that were barriers to effective program design.

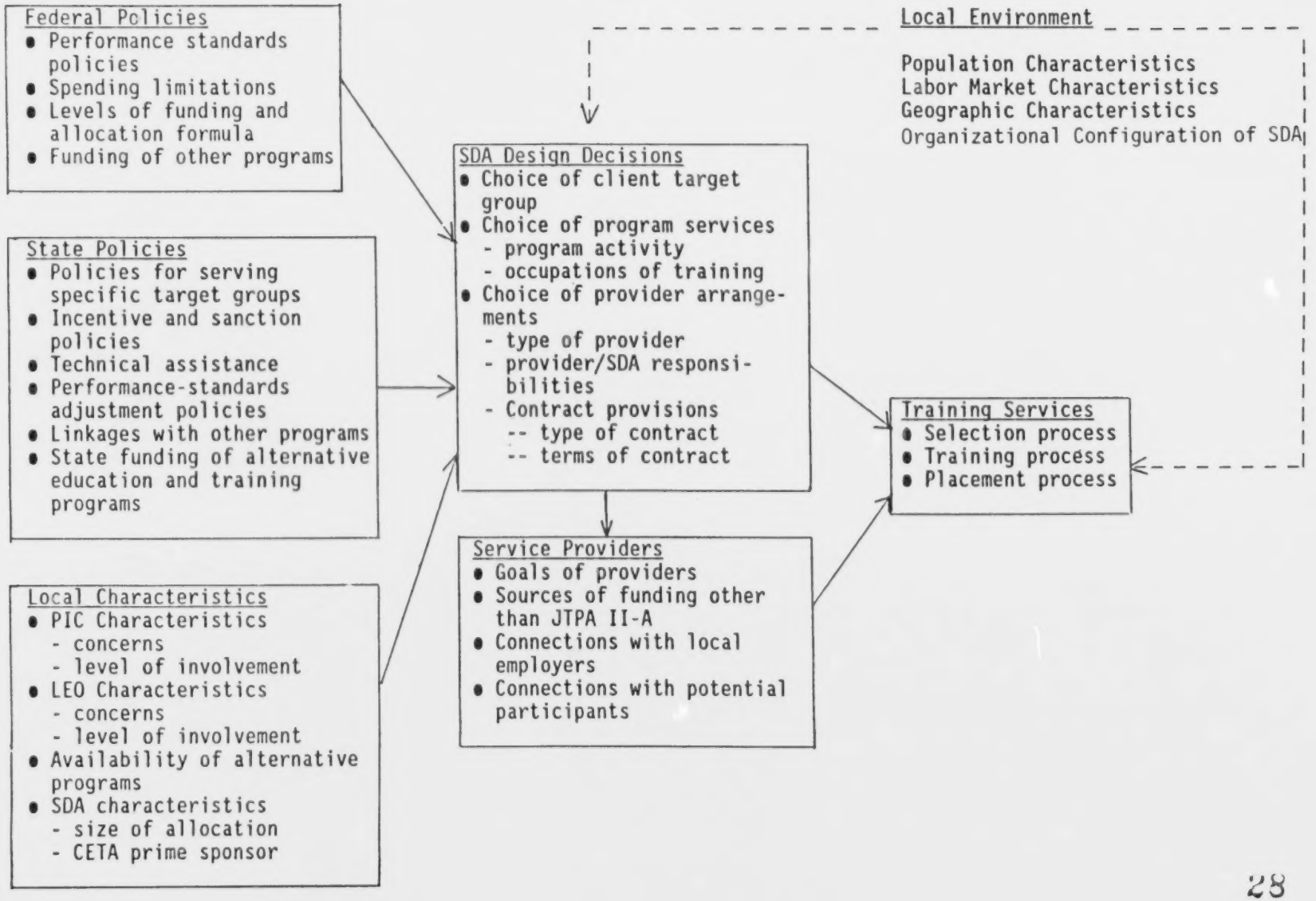
System-level factors influencing the quality of JTPA training can be divided into direct and indirect influences. Among the direct influences are SDA program design decisions (e.g. whether to target specific groups of clients, what services to offer, and how to specify required performance levels in service provider contracts) and characteristics of service providers (e.g. service provider philosophy of training and whether the service provider has access to additional funding sources beyond JTPA funds).

In addition, there are local, state and federal factors that indirectly affect the quality of JTPA training services, primarily through their influence on the SDA program design and management decisions. These factors may facilitate or impede the design of quality programs.

Federal JTPA policies have an important impact on SDAs' design of quality services. Factors include: the level of JTPA funding, the existence of the federally-initiated JTPA performance standards, and various JTPA spending restrictions, including limits on administrative expenditures and client support costs.

Figure I-2

System-Level Model of Program Design and Influences



State policies can also have an important influence on JTPA program design. Many states have policies for serving specific hard-to-serve groups. These policies range from monitoring of equal opportunity requirements to the establishment of state performance standards for serving specific groups. These policies are likely to affect SDAs' decisions about the appropriate selection process. Other aspects of state performance standards policies that affect SDA design decisions include incentive and sanction policies.

In addition, state policies linking JTPA with other programs may affect the quality of JTPA services. Several states, for example, have policies that link the JTPA program with workfare programs designed to increase the employability of welfare recipients. As a result, SDAs may face strong pressure to enroll more welfare recipients and to focus program services on the needs of these individuals. State funding of other education and training programs is also hypothesized to have an important impact on JTPA program design. The technical assistance provided by the state may also affect program quality.

Several local factors may also affect program design quality. These influences include: the PIC's involvement in the design and administration of JTPA in each local area; the involvement and program orientation of local elected officials; coordination with the Employment Service, public assistance agencies, schools and other related programs; and characteristics of the SDA itself (e.g. size of the SDA, and the characteristics of the eligible population and of the local labor market).

In comparing the quality of training findings across the 15 case study SDAs, we have attempted to identify which system-level factors strengthened the quality of JTPA training, and which factors created hindrances or barriers to the ability of the SDA to provide quality training and achieve quality outcomes.

PROPOSED CRITERIA FOR THE QUALITY OF TRAINING

The criteria summarized in this section describe the program logic of a well-functioning employment and training system, without prescribing particular training methods or particular organizational structures. The way in which a particular principle of quality training is met can vary widely from SDA to SDA, but the different features have a common underlying function: to ensure that individuals are provided with training that is appropriate to their needs and that will improve both their immediate employment status and their long-term employment opportunities.

The principles of quality training may, in turn, be strengthened by a variety of management approaches that facilitate quality training outcomes. Among these approaches are system-level coordination efforts (e.g. between JTPA and other resource streams) and information sharing through technical assistance efforts. Rather than prescribe these management approaches, we based the operational criteria for this study on features of the SDA-level administration of JTPA programs that directly influence the quality of the services obtained by individual program participants as well as the quality of the jobs they obtain as a result of JTPA training.

Appendix A summarizes the quality training criteria upon which the topic guides for the study were based. In some cases we determined whether a criterion had been met by directly observing program operations or by interviewing SDA or service provider staff. In other cases, we used a variety of different indicators reflecting different aspects of a given criterion in determining whether the criterion had been met by a given SDA or service provider. Quality of training criteria were developed for each of five different areas of program design and operations, each of which is described below:

- Client Recruitment, Selection and Assignment to Services
- Program Design and Management
- Provision of Training

- Job Placement Policies and Practices
- Employment Outcomes.

Client Recruitment, Assessment, and Assignment to Services

In order to meet the quality of training criteria for client recruitment, assessment, and assignment to services, an SDA should have a clear set of goals about what groups it wants to serve. In addition, either the SDA or its service providers should have implemented an outreach and recruitment strategy that is effective in reaching the desired clients. The SDA or its service providers should assess applicants' strengths and weaknesses and use this information in developing a service plan and employment goals that are appropriate for each client. Clients should be referred to the particular service option most appropriate to their needs and interests, and applicants not appropriate for a particular service should be referred to alternate services in the community.

In assessing the extent to which these criteria were met in the case study SDAs, we looked at SDA-wide policies and practices, and examined the practices of selected service providers.

Program Design and Management

In order to meet the quality of training criteria in the area of program design and management, an SDA should have consciously designed its available services to meet the needs of the JTPA-eligible population, and should retain enough control over the selection, design, and operation of specific occupational training programs to ensure that its service priorities are being carried out. Specific features of the program design should include: a sufficiently varied range of services to meet the needs of less job ready, as well as more job ready applicants; the design of training curricula that are sensitive to the needs of JTPA clients; and the provision of training that is well matched to the demand occupations in the local economy. In addition, SDAs should provide training that is oriented to providing high quality

jobs, and should offer sequencing of services to address the multiple employment barriers of some clients. Finally, an SDA should communicate its objective of offering quality training and quality placements to its service providers, and should monitor service provider activities to ensure that quality training is taking place.

We assessed the extent to which SDAs met these criteria through discussions and observations at the SDA level in each of the case study SDAs.

Provision of Training

In order to meet the quality of training criteria for design and delivery of training, a provider of JTPA training should have clear skills training objectives and employment goals for participants, and should enroll participants who are appropriate for that particular training program in terms of skills prerequisites, employment experience, and occupational interests. The training curricula should be responsive to the particular skills needed by prospective employers. In addition, trainers should: follow a logical sequence, include job-relevant information, be oriented to the skill level of the trainees, stress "training for transfer", stress active learning, use class time effectively, systematically evaluate student progress, coordinate occupational skills training with basic skills remediation, provide needed supportive services, and effectively link occupational training and job development/job placement.

We applied the criteria for the quality of training to the providers of selected training curricula in each case study SDA.

Job Placement Policies and Practices

In order to meet the quality of training criteria for job placement policies and practices, an SDA or its service providers should have a clear job placement goal for each trainee. In order to achieve its placement goals, an SDA and/or its service providers should have

designated staff responsible for placement and effective placement procedures. Job placements should build on the skills acquired during training and should emphasize quality outcomes, including high wages, good fringe benefit packages, and stable employment with the opportunity for advancement.

We applied the quality of training criteria regarding job placement procedures to SDAs and selected service providers.

Employment Outcomes

In order to meet the criteria for quality outcomes, the participants in each training program should be assisted in obtaining the highest quality job appropriate to their level of employability. Placements should also be consistent with the clients' employment goals. Wages, fringe benefits, and opportunities for advancement should all be considered in making placements. If a training program is serving individuals who are receiving welfare benefits, a special effort should be made to achieve job placements that will offer opportunities for financial self-sufficiency.

Judgments about the quality of employment outcomes were based on the outcomes for a small sample of former clients in each selected training curriculum.

DESIGN FOR SELECTING SAMPLE SDAS AND SAMPLE OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING CURRICULA

The study of the quality of training in JTPA was conducted in a sample of 15 SDAs, with in-depth evaluation of three training curricula in each SDA. As part of the examination of each of the 45 sample training activities, we also conducted case-record reviews of three past participants and attempted to contact each of these past participants and their first post-training employer. This section describes the procedures that were used to select samples of SDAs, training activities, and individuals.

Two goals of the evaluation were considered in designing the sampling strategy. First, the study was intended to assess the quality of training that is currently provided in JTPA. Second, the study was intended to identify policies and practices that can improve the quality of training in JTPA. To meet the first goal, the sample needed to be as representative of the JTPA system as possible; to meet the second goal, the sample needed to represent the operation of JTPA in as wide a variety of circumstances as possible to reflect differences in implementation that affect training quality. The choice of sampling strategies involved several tradeoffs between these two goals.

Sampling SDAS

Because it was important that the results of this evaluation be representative of the JTPA system as a whole, we selected 15 SDAs using a random selection procedure. The first issue addressed in designing the SDA sampling strategy was what the sample should represent: the quality of training offered by a typical SDA or the quality of training received by a typical participant. These two perspectives differ because not all SDAs are the same size. To be representative of the typical SDA, all SDAs should have had the same probability of selection. However, because there are a large number of small SDAs, this procedure would have resulted in a sample dominated by small SDAs. To be representative of the typical participant, SDAs should have been selected with probability proportional to the SDA's size. This is the procedure that was used.

To ensure that we observed JTPA operations in a variety of settings, we stratified the sample of SDAs on two variables--(1) unemployment rate in PY 87 and (2) the ratio of the SDA's performance on the average wage at placement standard to its model adjusted standard for PY 87. The unemployment rate has dramatic effects on JTPA operations and was considered likely to affect the quality of training. The wage at placement represents one of the key features of quality jobs and thus helped ensure that we studied sites which varied in the degree to which SDAs had achieved high wage placements.

In addition, within each cell in the sampling framework, we ordered the SDAs according to population density to ensure a mix of urban and rural SDAs. We also adopted a rule that each region must be represented in the sample and that no more than two SDAs could come from any one region. Finally, SDAs were chosen with probability proportional to PY 87 total expenditures.

The 15 SDAs resulting from this procedure are listed in Figure I-3. Unemployment was rated low if it was less than 6.3%, and high if it equaled or exceeded 6.3%. Average wage relative to the model-adjusted standard was rated low if it was less than 103.8%, and high if it equaled or exceeded 103.8%. The four cells are:

- Low Unemployment Rate and Low Average Wage Rate. Approximately 20% of PY 78 expenditures are in this category; we selected 3 SDAs or 20% of our sample from this cell.

- Low Unemployment Rate and High Average Wage Rate. Approximately 27% of PY 78 expenditures are in this category; we selected 4 SDAs or 27% of our sample from this cell.

- High Unemployment Rate and Low Average Wage Rate. Approximately 33% of PY 78 expenditures are in this category; we selected 5 SDAs or 33% of our sample.

- High Unemployment and High Average Wage Rate. Approximately 20% of PY 78 expenditures are in this category; we selected 3 SDAs or 20% of our sample.

Figure I-4 is a matrix that lists additional characteristics of the SDAs in the sample. In addition to the selection variables, it also lists characteristics of the state incentive policies and SDA practices that were hypothesized to be related to quality training. The data for these variables were taken from surveys of states and SDAs completed during PY87 as part of the SRI/BPA study conducted for the National Commission for Employment Policy of the effect of performance standards

Figure I-3

Improving the Quality of Training Under JTPA
Sample Sites by Stratification Variables

Average Wage Rate Relative to Model-Adjusted Standard	Unemployment Rates in PY87	
	Low	High
Low	1. Orange County SDA Orlando, FL 2. Bergen County SDA Hackensack, NJ 3. Western Wisconsin SDA La Crosse, WI	8. SDA 13 Rock Island, IL 9. Fort Worth Consortium Fort Worth, TX 10. St. Louis City SDA St. Louis, MO 11. Jackson/Josephine Consortium Medford, OR 12. Merced County SDA Merced, CA
High	4. Susquehanna SDA Harrisburg, PA 5. Hartford Consortium Hartford, CT 6. NOVA SDA Sunnyvale, CA 7. Region H SDA Rockingham, NC	13. Uintah SDA Roosevelt, UT 14. Planning District 2 Consortium Hammond, LA 15. Niagara County SDA Lockport, NY

Figure I-4

Characteristics of Sample: Improving the Qality of Training Under JTPA

		Stratification Variables			State Policies		SDA Practices			PY 86 Adult Training Mix (%)			
(PY 88 II-A Allocation) In dollars	Region	Unemployment Rate	Wage Rate as % of Standard	Population Density*	Whether Hard-to-Serve Policy Exists	Index of Emphasis on Exceeding Standards	% of Activities with Objective Criteria	% of Activities with Subjective Criteria	% of Adult Performance-Based Contracts	Job Search Assistance	On the Job Training	Classroom Training	Basic Skills Training
I. LOW UNEMPLOYMENT AND LOW ON WAGE STANDARD													
1. Orange County SDA Orlando, FL (1,958,569)	IV	4.5	98.3	0.2	No	.29	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
2. Bergen County SDA Hackensack, NJ (1,010,464)	II	2.6	101.8	3.5	No	.51	100	0	25	32	9	19	2
3. Western Wisconsin SDA LaCrosse, WI (1,521,877)	V	5.8	98.1	0.0	No	-.79	25	[illegible]	74	43	18	34	0
II. LOW UNEMPLOYMENT AND HIGH ON WAGE STANDARD													
4. Susquehanna SDA Harrisburg, PA (1,391,968)	III	4.0	104.5	0.2	No	-.64	50	50	19	5	47	11	36
5. Hartford Consortium Hartford, CT (1,735,006)	I	2.8	123.8	0.7	Yes	-.34	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
6. NOVA SDA Sunnyvale, CA (542,520)	IX	2.9	109.2	3.9	Yes	.36	0	0	64	1	8	81	8
7. Region H SDA Rockingham, NC (673,286)	IV	4.3	108.3	0.0	No	-1.53	0	50	0	5	82	13	0
III. HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT AND LOW ON WAGE STANDARD													
8. SDA 13 Rock Island, IL (1,907,784)	V	8.2	102.4	0.1	No	-.69	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
9. Fort Worth Consortium Fort Worth, TX (4,595,243)	VI	7.3	93.5	1.7	Yes	-1.05	67	0	24	39	37	24	0
10. St. Louis City SDA St. Louis, MO (3,888,052)	VII	8.5	89.2	7.0	No	.69	75	50	23	50	15	24	2
11. Jackson/Josephine Consortium Medford, OR (1,325,611)	X	6.4	95.6	0.0	No	-1.52	25	100	0	43	40	4	0
12. Merced County SDA Merced, CA (1,804,246)	IX	10.7	102.4	0.0	Yes	.36	33	0	34	42	31	21	5

Figure I-4 (continued)

	Stratification Variables				State Policies		SDA Practices			PY 86 Adult Training Mix (%)			
	Region	Unemployment Rate	Wage Rate as % of Standard	Population Density*	Whether Hard-to-Serve Policy Exists	Index of Emphasis on Exceeding Standards	% of Activities with Objective Criteria	% of Activities with Subjective Criteria	% of Adult Performance-Based Contracts	Job Search Assistance	On the Job Training	Classroom Training	Basic Skills Training
IV. HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT AND HIGH ON WAGE STANDARD													
13. Uintah SDA Roosevelt, UT (422,013)	VIII	10.4	113.7	0.0	Yes	.71	0	0	0	55	14	26	5
14. Planning District 2 Consortium Hammond, LA (4,950,190)	VI	13.0	107.7	0.0	Yes	.71	**	**	**	**	**	**	**
15. Niagara County SDA Lockport, NY (1,402,665)	II	6.4	106.5	0.4	Yes	-1.24	50	25	2	7	42	26	26
Sample Average	--	6.5	103.7	1.18	47%	-.32	39%	25%	24%	29%	31%	26%	8%
National Average	--	6.3	103.8	Median= 0.13	37%	-.25	40%	36%		24%	30%	32%	7%

*In 1000's; maximum = 7.

**Non-respondents to survey; information not available.

on clients, services, and costs. (SRI International and Berkeley Planning Associates, 1988) These data enabled us to check that our sample offered enough variation on additional variables describing state policies, SDA practices and training characteristics.

Several of the cells in the matrix in Figure I-4 are empty, because these SDAs were non-respondents to the referenced survey. Using the information from the SDAs for which we have data, sample averages were calculated and compared to the national averages for the various characteristics. As Figure I-4 shows, the average for the sample as a whole is quite similar to the national average on each measure.

Sampling Training Activities

We defined a training activity as the services provided under one curriculum. Thus a course that trains individuals as home-health aides but integrates basic skills training and job-search training into the curriculum was considered a single training activity. In many cases a service provider provides several training activities under a single contract with the SDA.

In selecting the sample training activities, the first issue to be resolved was what types of training activities to include in the sampling frame. We decided to exclude in-school youth programs because the focus of the evaluation is on whether training leads to quality jobs, which are not the immediate goals of most in-school programs.

We also excluded programs offering job-search assistance only from this component of the evaluation, although we did examine the role of job-search assistance in the SDA-level interviews. The logic for this decision was that we wanted to assess the content of the training in each sample activity, and the extent to which the training matched the job skills required by employers. For this reason we limited ourselves to skills training in a specific occupational area (with the one exception of basic skills "stand alone" activities as described below).

A similar issue arose regarding whether to include or exclude basic-skills training from the sampling frame. Since a substantial portion of the basic skills training provided by JTPA is offered as part of an integrated basic skills/occupational skills curriculum, we planned to assess basic skills training in that context. However, because the issue of basic skills remediation is such an important element in obtaining quality jobs for individuals with basic skills deficiencies, we also included "stand alone" basic skills services in our sampling frame. Because only 7% of separate JTPA services are in basic skills training, according to the NCEP study, this category comprised only a small component of the sampled activities.

Developing procedures to sample training activities was much more difficult than developing procedures to sample SDAs. Ideally we would have needed a complete list of training activities in each of the sample SDAs and the number of participants in each of those activities in order to draw a sample. Further, we needed to select the sample of training activities in each SDA before we arrived on site so that we could schedule interviews with providers, trainers, participants, and employers.

We found, however, that this detailed information was often not available at the SDA level. All SDAs provided information about the service providers that were used, the dollar totals for contract amounts, and enrollment in the major categories of program activities provided. SDAs also generally had information about the number of individuals who participated in major categories of activities, such as classroom training in occupational skills (CRT), on-the-job training (OJT), and basic skills remediation. Occasionally, SDAs also had counts of the number of terminees who had received training in various occupational categories across different service providers.

Our strategy for selecting the sample of training activities, therefore, was as follows:

- For each SDA, we determined the number of training activities to be selected in each major category (i.e. CRT, OJT, and Basic Skills) by randomly selecting the three basic training categories with probability proportional to the number of individuals who participated in each category in the SDA.

- We then requested from the SDA a list of the five largest service providers of the selected categories of activities, along with information about (1) the type of provider, and (2) any particular targeted population (e.g., adult, youth, specific hard-to-serve groups, general eligible population). From this information we selected a purposive sample of three providers in each SDA that ensured variation in these dimensions across all SDAs.

- We then obtained information from the SDA or from the selected service providers about the four highest volume specific occupational training programs that they provided in the selected category (OJT, CRT, or Basic Skills) and chose a training activity that resulted in a varied sample across all 45 sampled training curricula.

Consider the following example. In PY 87, one of the case study SDAs provided 78% of its activities in OJT, 12% in classroom training and none in basic skills remediation. We determined the number of training activities to be selected in these categories by randomly selecting categories with probability proportional to the number of participants in each activity. In this example, we selected by chance two activities in the OJT category and one in classroom training. We then obtained from the SDA the major providers of OJT and classroom training and purposively selected a community college offering class-size CRT, and two local Job Service offices operating OJT (one in each of two different counties in the SDA). We then discovered that the selected CRT provider operated only a single occupational curriculum in

that county using JTPA funds (a hospitality training program). If the provider had operated more than one occupational training curriculum, we would have selected the largest program that was in an occupational training area we had not yet oversampled at some other local site.

This sampling strategy resulted in a representative sample of training activities that also contained variation on important characteristics that may affect the quality of training. Figure I-5 summarizes the different categories of training and types of providers selected from each of the case study SDAs. In order to protect the anonymity of each SDA and service provider (which we guaranteed as a condition of participation in the study), the SDAs are listed here with a randomly assigned letter name, instead of by their real name.

A total of 22 occupational classroom training activities were selected for study, two of which had separate basic skills training lessons as part of the integrated training curriculum. Four stand-alone basic skills training programs were selected for study. Figure I-6 lists the specific types of occupational training included in the entire study sample of 26 classroom training activities (including both occupational skills training and basic skills training classes). The remaining 19 training activities selected for study were on-the-job training programs.

Where OJT was such a predominant type of training that it was selected for two out of three training activities (as happened in five of the 15 case study SDAs), there weren't always two distinct providers of OJT. In most cases, we merged the "two" OJT discussions into a single case example, but doubled the number of individual case files reviewed, current OJT site observations made, and previous OJT participants and employers contacted.

Figure I-5

Sampling Design for Selection of Training Activities Across Sample SDAs

SDA	Number of CRT Activities Sampled (Provider Type)	Number of OJT Activities Sampled (Provider Type)	Number of Basic Skills Activities Sampled (Provider Type)
A	3 CRT (1 comm. college) (2 proprietary)	0 OJT	0 stand alone (two CRT have Basic Skills components)
B	1 CRT (proprietary)	2 OJT (1 private non-profit) (1 Job Service)	0 Basic Skills
C	2 CRT (2 comm. college)	1 OJT (SDA)	0 Basic Skills
D	1 CRT (private non-profit)	1 OJT (SDA)	1 Basic Skills (SDA)
E	1 CRT (comm. college)	1 OJT (SDA)	1 Basic Skills (SDA)
F	2 CRT (2 proprietary)	1 OJT (SDA)	0 Basic Skills
G	1 CRT (school district)	2 OJT (1 school district) (1 proprietary)	0 Basic Skills
H	1 CRT (voc tech school)	1 OJT (SDA)	1 Basic Skills (voc tech school)
I	2 CRT (2 tech college)	1 OJT (consortium)	0 Basic Skills
J	1 CRT (proprietary)	2 OJT* (SDA)	0 Basic Skills
K	2 CRT (2 voc tech center)	1 OJT (Job Service)	0 Basic Skills
L	1 CRT (comm. college)	2 OJT (2 Job Service)	0 Basic Skills

Figure I-5 (continued)

SDA	Number of CRT Activities Sampled (Provider Type)	Number of OJT Activities Sampled (Provider Type)	Number of Basic Skills Activities Sampled (Provider Type)
M	1 CRT (proprietary)	2 OJT* (SDA)	0 stand alone
N	2 CRT (1 proprietary) (1 comm. college)	1 OJT (SDA)	0 Basic Skills
O	1 CRT (1 proprietary)	1 OJT (private for profit)	1 Basic Skills (comm. college: integrated with adult work experience)
TOTAL	22 CRT (2 with integrated Basic Skills components)	19 OJT (17 OJT providers)	4 stand alone Basic Skills

Notes:

* Although counted as two training activities, these OJT programs have only a single provider.

Figure I-6

Description of 26 Sample Classroom Training Curricula
(Basic Skills and Occupational Skills Training)

SDA	Occupation/ Training Program Title	Type of Service Provider	Duration of Training
A	Training to be a Service Provider for Disabled Children ***	Private Non-Profit	12 weeks
A	Precision Machinist Training (integrated with basic skills)	Private Non-Profit	Open entry/exit
A	Nurse's Assistant Training (integrated with basic skills)	Community College	10 weeks
B	Computer Training	Proprietary School	20 weeks
C	Medical Secretary Curriculum	Community College	6 - 9 months
C	Electronics Assembly Training	Community College	3 weeks
D	Medicare Claims Examiner Training **	Private for Profit	7 weeks
D	ABE/GED Classes	SDA	Varied duration
E	Accounting Specialist	Community College	2 years
E	Basic Skills Program	SDA	16 weeks - 1 yr.
F	LPN Training	Proprietary School	1 year
F	Computerized Bookkeeping Training	Proprietary School	13 weeks Open entry/exit
G	Electronics Assembly	School District	14 weeks
H	Building Trades Course	Voc Tech School	18 weeks
H	Basic Skills Remediation	Voc Tech School	Open entry/exit Varied duration
I	Wood Technics Program	Technical College	1 year

Figure I-6 (continued)

SDA	Occupation/ Training Program Title	Type of Service Provider	Duration of Training
I	Office Computer Specialist Program	Technical College	1 year
J	Truck Driver Training	Proprietary School	9 weeks
K	Business Program	Voc Tech School	Varies: completion of certificate requires 5 quarters
K	Industrial Welding Program	Voc Tech School	1 year
L	Hospitality Industry Training	Community College	6 weeks
M	Retail Sales Training (integrated with basic skills)*	Proprietary School	Open entry/exit 4 - 16 weeks
N	Business Office Personnel Training	Community College	Open entry/exit (6 mo. - 1 yr.)
N	Computer Service Technician Training	Proprietary School	6 months
O	Automotive Maintenance Mechanic Training	Proprietary School	24 weeks
O	Basic Skills/Work Experience	Community College	6 months

Notes:

* Targeted to youth

** Customized training for 1 employer

*** Targeted to AFDC recipients

SAMPLING PARTICIPANTS

OJT Participant Samples

In the case of on-the-job training, two distinct samples of individual participants were drawn. First, two current program enrollees were randomly selected for on-site observations of OJT instruction and work-site performance. Occasionally, replacements had to be drawn for these individuals--for example, if the employer refused to permit an on-site visit from the field researcher.

Second, three former program participants were randomly selected from those individuals who left OJT positions with a positive termination between 6 months and 1 year prior to the field visit. Telephone or face-to-face contacts were arranged with these former trainees and their first employer after leaving training (i.e. the OJT employer), and written case files were reviewed for each sampled individual.

Classroom Training Participant Samples

In the case of classroom training activities, the client sample consisted only of three former participants. As with former OJT participants, the former classroom trainees were randomly drawn from individuals who had terminated from that training program between 6 months and 12 months prior to the field visit. As with the OJT sample, telephone or face-to-face contacts were arranged with former trainees and their first employer after leaving training, and written case files were reviewed.

CASE STUDY METHODS: RESPONDENTS, DATA SOURCES, AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

Using the conceptual model described in Section B as a guide, the study team developed topic guides to be used with a variety of respondents during the visits to 15 SDAs. The topics cover the entire range of client-level and system-level factors delineated in the

conceptual models in order to gain an overall picture of service systems, rather than a narrow look at the training process standing alone. Thus, the topic guides include questions about service system design, the outreach and enrollment processes, and placement outcomes, as well as questions about the particular training activities being examined in the SDA.

Because the study investigated the quality of JTPA training in the context of the service system as a whole, a variety of data collection techniques and data sources were utilized. First, on-site discussions were held with SDA staff and service providers responsible for designing training programs, and then with the individuals responsible for each stage of program implementation, from outreach and recruitment, to assessment and screening, to training followed by placement. Second, on-site observations of several stages in the training process were attempted, including observations of JTPA orientation sessions, development of service plans, and class instruction. Third, comments were sought from JTPA trainees at several stages of program participation: during enrollment in training, and post training. Fourth, input from employers was obtained regarding the adequacy of the job skills exhibited by graduates from the sampled training programs. Finally, we made extensive use of existing materials, such as planning documents, statistical reports, written curricula, and individual case files.

Figure I-7 lists the 14 topic guides that were used during the site visits. A matrix of data sources by study topics is included as Appendix B to this report. Multiple data sources were used to gather information on most topics. Site visits to each SDA lasted, on average, 8 person days, and utilized the skills of two experienced field researchers.

Figure I-7

List of Topic Guides

1. **Focus Groups with JTPA Applicants**
   (current applicants, as feasible during site visit)

2. **Focus Groups with JTPA Participants**
   (current participants; one group per sample training activity)

3. **Discussions with SDA-Level Staff**

4. **Discussions with Service Provider Staff about JTPA System Functions**
   (such as recruitment, assessment, development of service plan, job placement)

5. **Discussions with Service Provider Staff about the Provision of Training**

6. **Observations of System Functions**
   (client orientation, assessment, development of service plan: may occur at SDA or service provider level)

7. **Observations of the Provision of Training**
   (for three sample activities per SDA)

8. **Record Reviews for Sample of Five Former Participants per Sample Training Activity**
   (may occur at SDA and/or service provider site)

9. **Discussions with Service Provider Staff about Five Former Participants per Sample Training Activity**

10. **Discussions with Two Former Participants from Each Sample Training Activity**

Figure I-7 (continued)

11. **Discussions with Two Employers of Two Former Participants from Each Sample Training Activity**

12. **Reviews of Written Curriculum Material**

13. **Reviews of Written SDA-Level Documents**
(e.g. annual plan client selection procedures, performance standards summaries, contracts with sample service providers)

14. **Reviews of Available Aggregate SDA and Project Statistics**

II. SDA PROGRAM DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: SDA FACTORS INFLUENCING THE QUALITY OF JTPA TRAINING

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

This chapter describes how Service Delivery Area policies and practices have influenced the quality of JTPA training. In the conceptual model for this study, we distinguished between "system level" and "client level" models of quality training. System level influences on the quality of training include how SDA policies and practices have shaped:

- the **target groups** that have received priority in local JTPA programming decisions and client outreach and recruitment practices;

- the **mix of program activities** that have been selected for funding, including

  -- the relative emphasis on pre-employment training, basic skills training, occupational skills training, and direct placement or other "services only" categories;

  -- the relative emphasis on classroom training and on-the-job training, within the occupational skills training category; and

- the **selection of organizations to deliver direct client services**, the negotiation of service provider contracts, and the monitoring of service provider activities.

A second set of SDA activities directly influence the quality of direct service delivery at the client level. This second grouping of activities includes SDA responsibilities for the actual delivery of services to clients through direct service functions, such as

- the **outreach and recruitment practices** for bringing JTPA applicants into the program,

- procedures for **assessing client needs, matching clients to appropriate services, and developing a comprehensive service plan and employment goal for each enrollee;**

- the **delivery of training and supportive services** designed to enable the selected clients to become employable in their chosen field; and

- the **provision of job development, job placement, or job search skills training** sufficient to ensure that there is a good match between the JTPA trainee's job goals, the occupational skills of the trainee at the completion of training, and the need of the prospective employer for a skilled employee.

In most SDAs, however, the administrative entity does not perform all of these client-level recruitment, training, and placement functions itself. Instead, the SDA delegates responsibility for many of these direct client services to third party service providers, who are awarded contracts (usually through a competitive bidding process) to carry out some specific subset of direct client services to JTPA enrollees, under SDA supervision.

We examined the program management and direct service delivery functions carried out at the SDA level in each of the 15 case study SDAs. We also examined the quality of functions carried out by contracted service providers, based on our sample of three different training programs selected in each SDA for detailed study. (See Chapter I for a description of the selection of this sample.)

The rest of this chapter focuses on the activities in which SDAs play a key role in influencing the quality of the training provided to JTPA participants. The next section describes SDA system-level

policies and practices, including the SDA role in identifying and conducting outreach to priority client groups and deciding what mix of training services to provide. Next, we describe how SDAs directly and indirectly influence the quality of training services provided to individual JTPA participants through SDA involvement in the delivery of assessment and the development of individual service plans, and through SDA practices in selecting service providers and contracting for the delivery of training and placement services. Finally, we summarize the SDA-level factors that influence the quality of training provided in the JTPA program.

QUALITY OF SDA SYSTEM-LEVEL POLICIES AND PRACTICES

SDA Client Targeting Goals and Recruitment Practices

Description of SDA Client Targeting Goals

One of the criteria for assessing the quality of JTPA training is:

- **whether the SDA has clearly identified which target groups within the JTPA eligible population it wants to reach.**

The logic behind this criterion is that the PIC and staff of a well-managed SDA should examine the barriers to employment experienced by different population segments within the SDA jurisdiction, should plan which groups they want to reach with JTPA services, and should develop a strategy for how to best serve these groups.

The current JTPA regulations permit substantial local discretion in setting client targeting policy for the JTPA program. The JTPA legislation defines program eligibility and requires equitable service levels for high school dropouts and AFDC recipients subject to work requirements, but stops short of urging SDAs to disproportionately serve high risk groups within the eligible population. Some states play a pro-active role in encouraging SDAs to reach hard-to-serve individuals,

monitoring equitable service levels to a number of different population segments, and offering financial incentives for SDAs that serve high numbers of hard-to-serve clients. Other states defer to SDAs in establishing client priorities.

Thus, the JTPA system, as designed, expects SDAs to play a major role in focusing program resources to address the needs of particular groups at the local level. However, only six of the fifteen SDAs included in the study sample had singled out particular groups to receive priority attention in service targeting (i.e. designated groups which the SDA wanted to serve at levels higher than equitable service levels). The remaining nine SDAs fell into two groups -- (1) those passively favoring equitable service to different population segments, and (2) those actively undertaking strategies to ensure that no groups were underserved. Virtually all the nine SDAs without designated priority groups had stated goals of equitable service, that is, they wanted to serve different population segments in proportion to their representation in the JTPA eligible population. In practice, however, some SDAs actively monitored service patterns and undertook corrective action when certain groups were underserved. Other SDAs had a policy of serving "whoever came through the door," as long as they were JTPA-eligible.

The policies of the six SDAs in the group with clear client target groups are summarized in Figure II-1, along with an assessment of how the SDA's service design supports the target policy. The most frequently designated target group listed in Figure II-1 is **youth at risk of dropping out of high school**, mentioned by four of the six SDAs with client priority goals. This may reflect political constraints that make it more acceptable to give priority to youth than to other groups. It may also be influenced by the federal requirement to spend 40% of JTPA dollars on youth.

Four of the six SDAs with clear client goals also designated at least one hard-to-serve adult group as a priority target group. Among those targeted were **AFDC recipients, GA recipients, structurally**

Figure II-1

Description of SDA Target Groups
SDAs With Stated Client Priorities (N=6)

SDA	SDA Target Groups	How Service Design Supports Target Policy
A	At-risk youth, Dropouts, AFDC recipients, Structurally unemployed	In response to an applicant pool that is educationally deficient, this SDA offers basic skills training as a "stand-alone" service, and as an integrated part of occupational skills curricula. Service mix emphasizes classroom training; persons with 6th grade reading and math levels can qualify for classroom training. A separate contract offers counseling to hard-to-serve individuals to overcome barriers to JTPA participation. SDA addresses childcare and transportation needs with supportive services.
B	High risk youth, Adults with basic skills deficiencies	Most funds go to an in-school youth program operated by the school district that targets youth functioning two or more grade levels below norms. Adults may receive basic skills remediation through 8% funds (though this is mostly channeled to inmates of minimum security prisons). High school diploma or GED required for most classroom training. Token supportive services allowances are available for transportation and childcare.
E	Single parent household heads, Dropouts	Individuals without high school diploma or GED are unlikely to access classroom training; dropouts are channeled to OJT or computerized GED training. Lots of welfare recipients with high school diploma attend long-term (1 - 2 yr.) classroom training at community college. Needs based payment of $20 per week for classroom training participants were recently deleted.

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Figure II-1 (continued)

SDA	SDA Target Groups	How Service Design Supports Target Policy
I	High risk youth, including early intervention with 14, 15 year olds	All dropouts are required to return to high school or obtain GED as prerequisite of occupational skills training. Special projects for dropouts, potential dropouts. SDA serves above-average proportions of females, minorities, dropouts, and welfare recipients in classroom training. SDA tries to link classroom training and on-the-job training. SDA emphasizes leveraging welfare funds and Pell grants for assistance directly.
J	AFDC, GA, and Food Stamp recipients, Dropouts	SDA does not offer basic skills remediation for adults (an adult Remedial Center was planned for PY89); classroom training is reserved for those with good academic skills and ability to support self during training. Individuals with greatest employment barriers receive only job search assistance, and are enrolled only after client has found a job. Child care assistance and transportation to out-of-county training is available. Small stipends are available to participants in classroom training.
L	At-risk (in school) youth	Youth programming is offered at four drop-out prevention centers operated by the school districts. The SDA staff feel they cannot offer basic skills remediation to adults with JTPA funds, since there is no adult competency standard. Several new class-size occupational classroom training programs are trying to recruit those without GEDs for linked occupational training/GED preparation curricula. Otherwise, classroom training is reserved for those with GED and no basic skills deficiencies. Those with the greatest employment barriers are limited to a three week Job Club program. No supportive services are available to JTPA participants.

unemployed, single parent households, Food Stamp recipients, and adults with basic skills deficiencies.

A close examination of the service designs of these SDAs raises some questions, however, about the degree of commitment and realism involved in targeting these clients.

For example, **SDA B** stated that adults with basic skills deficiencies were a priority group, and yet it did not use any of its 78% funds for basic skills remediation for adults. (Adults can receive literacy and basic skills training in this SDA through 8%-funded programs, but a high proportion of these 8% funds are used to serve prison inmates.)

A more troubling example is **SDA J**, which officially targeted several hard-to-serve groups, including welfare recipients, Food Stamp recipients, and dropouts. This SDA, however, matched clients with the greatest employment barriers to its least intensive service package, consisting only of job search training, vocational exploration, and intermittent contacts with a job placement counselor, and enrolled individuals from the "job search track" only after they located employment.

In contrast, **SDA A** targeted adult populations of dropouts, AFDC recipients and structurally unemployed, and designed a service mix that is clearly oriented to addressing the service needs of those groups. First, the SDA awarded a separate contract to a provider to counsel high risk adults about their barriers to JTPA participation (e.g., housing, family problems, drug dependency, welfare needs) and to develop supportive services to address those needs. Second, this SDA offered basic educational skills training both as a separate "stand-alone" service, and as an integrated part of occupation skills training curricula. Third, the SDA

designed classroom training in occupational skills that is appropriate for and open to individuals with 6th grade level reading and math scores. Finally, this SDA addressed both childcare needs and transportation needs with supportive services paid for by JTPA.

SDA E targeted both single parent household heads and dropouts. This SDA has developed a service mix that enables it to meet the occupational training needs of single parent household heads, as long as they are able to provide for their own subsistence needs while in training (from AFDC funds or Pell grants), and as long as they do not also need basic skills remediation. This SDA was successful in enrolling substantial numbers of AFDC recipients in long term occupational skills training at community college. On the other hand, the dropout target group has fewer options in this SDA, since classroom training usually requires a high school diploma or GED. Dropouts are strongly encouraged to complete their GED through a computerized GED training program before entering any occupational training component.

Summary of Findings on Client Targeting

Three major findings have emerged from the analysis of client targeting policies and practices in the 15 case study SDAS. First, SDAs do not often establish formal priority groups (beyond equitable service goals for different population segments). Second, where they do exist, most formal client targeting policies involve giving priority to at-risk youth. Third, even when formal target groups are established, the SDA's service design is not always appropriate for the stated target groups.

Only four of the 15 case study SDAs went out of their way to direct JTPA services to adult groups experiencing the most severe employment barriers within the JTPA eligible population, according to the criterion of formal client targeting policies. Furthermore, the official designation of priority target groups by itself appears to be a flawed

indicator of whether or not the SDA has undertaken a strategic planning process to identify local groups in need of JTPA services, and to design services to meet those needs. The criterion appears to be inadequate because it includes several case study SDAs whose service designs are not well suited to the priority groups they claim to be interested in serving.

Description of SDA Outreach and Recruitment Practices

The criteria of quality training that are relevant to SDA outreach and recruitment practices are:

- that the SDA should have a clear strategy for how to reach the groups it would like to serve, and

- that the SDA should implement that strategy through effective outreach and recruitment practices, either directly, or through supervising the activities of service provider staff.

This section describes SDA outreach and recruitment practices and assesses the extent to which they meet the quality of training criteria.

In eight of the 15 case study SDAs, the administrative entity had the sole responsibility for the outreach and recruitment function. In five additional SDAs, the SDA staff shared this function with at least some of their service providers. In the remaining two SDAs, SDA staff did not participate in outreach and recruitment, and the SDAs had no direct contact with JTPA clients at all. In these two SDAs, the entire operation of client services was delegated to various contractors.

The case study SDAs appear to cluster into two major categories on their outreach and recruitment practices and goals: those with an active approach to outreach and recruitment and those with a more passive approach that relies on networking with other agencies. Four

SDAs appeared to have active outreach and recruitment practices. The practices of these active SDAs are described below.

SDA A, which depended on both SDA staff and its service providers to do outreach and recruitment, had two full-time SDA staff members assigned to conduct outreach and recruitment. In addition, this SDA had purchased the services of a marketing firm to develop a strategy to recruit youth, and had recently purchased a bus to use as a "mobile" recruiting unit throughout the SDA. As described in earlier sections of this chapter, this SDA also had a formal policy of targeting at-risk youth and several hard-to-serve adult groups, and its service design was oriented to meeting the needs of individuals with basic skills deficiencies.

SDA I, whose outreach and recruitment strategies were also judged to be active, had a very different strategy from SDA A. In **SDA I**, the SDA paid each of its service providers to provide outreach through a set of 23 Job Training Information Centers, some of which were staffed, and some of which merely had materials available for interested individuals to take. The SDA also was trying to promote integrated intake units for Job Service, JTPA, and Vocational Education programs, and offered a special financial incentive to service providers that would develop a "one-stop" service approach, so that applicants could receive appropriate attention from each of these service systems through a single application process. Finally, the SDA took responsibility for public media outreach to advertise JTPA services to the general public.

SDA M, which shared responsibility for outreach and recruitment with its service providers, had developed a very sophisticated media public relations campaign, which included TV spots and a radio jingle utilizing "rap" music

to appeal to the youth population. The SDA also had developed an SDA coloring book as a public relations give-away, in which the pictures promoted nontraditional roles for men and women. Unfortunately, although its outreach and recruitment practices were very strong, this SDA emphasized the delivery of short-term, low-cost training to an extremely large number of participants. In response to PIC priorities, the SDA had designed low cost/high volume services that didn't have much to offer individuals with basic skills deficiencies, and which didn't provide a very deep investment in improving the employability of any individual client.

The fourth SDA rated active in its outreach and recruitment strategy -- **SDA C** -- depends on a variety of community based organizations (not necessarily JTPA service providers) to assist in recruiting particular groups that have been identified as requiring special attention. Examples include organizations serving Hispanic citizens, Southeast Asians, youth substance abusers, ex-offenders, and older workers. This SDA monitors equitable service goals for a variety of population segments and steps up outreach efforts for groups that appear to be slipping in their participation rates. The SDA also distributes flyers and posters advertising their services, runs TV and newspaper ads, and operates a speakers bureau to let other organizations know about JTPA. However, while this SDA is active in recruiting a variety of special needs groups to the JTPA program, its service design tends to track hard-to-serve clients into the least intensive services -- a three day job search seminar.

In summary, each of these four SDAs with active outreach and recruitment practices had well-developed strategies for how to reach the JTPA eligible population and developed very different practices to accomplish their outreach goals. For two of the four SDAs, active outreach and recruitment practices served to support a service design

that was oriented to serving the needs of hard-to-serve adults. For the remaining two SDAs, active outreach was not matched by a program design rich in alternatives for hard-to-serve clients.

The second group of 11 SDAs depended on networking in their approach to JTPA outreach and recruitment. Most of these SDAs have developed referral linkages with the major public and non-profit social service organizations in their community, and depend on these referral linkages to generate sufficient applicants to the JTPA system. We did not collect much detailed information about the recruitment practices in these SDAs: outreach and recruitment are not a high priority issue for SDA managers in these SDAs.

This category contains SDAs with widely varying levels of commitment to recruiting and enrolling hard-to-serve clients. At one extreme, **SDA N** has actively developed programs for a variety of special need groups, although it depends on its contractors to do their own recruitment. Programs have been developed in this SDA to reach out to particular groups experiencing employment difficulties in the generally healthy local economy, including disabled individuals and the homeless. At the other extreme, **SDA B** relies on word-of-mouth to generate JTPA applicants, although it retains responsibility for outreach at the SDA level. This SDA is not eager to recruit more applicants to its program because the local economy is so depressed it can't find jobs for the enrollees it has.

Some of the SDAs relying on networking for recruitment of JTPA applicants have managed to serve large proportions of adults with significant barriers to employment, through linkages with welfare systems and other service organizations or through word-of-mouth networking. Others, with less successful records in reaching hard-to-serve individuals, fall back on the often voiced argument that "anyone eligible for JTPA is hard to serve." While there is some truth to this claim in tight labor markets, the laissez faire approach to outreach and recruiting cannot be recommended as a management practice for SDAs attempting to meet the criteria for quality training.

The Effect of Coordination with Welfare-to-Work Programs on JTPA Client Targeting and Recruitment

Ten of the 15 case study SDAs have formal or informal linkages with work programs for welfare recipients in their state that influence the extent to which they serve AFDC recipients, and the types of services provided to this target group. Figure II-2 reviews these linkages.

Six of the ten SDAs with work-welfare linkages contracted with the welfare agency to administer a separate curriculum especially for AFDC clients referred by the welfare system. Three SDAs operate special basic skills curricula for welfare clients; three SDAs operate pre-vocational or job search skills training (one of which is combined with basic skills); and one SDA is paid by the welfare system to provide occupational classroom training to referred AFDC clients. In five of these six SDAs, clients receiving employment and training services funded by the welfare system are not enrolled in JTPA until or unless they enter a service component funded with 78% funds. However, one of the SDAs providing a job club for AFDC recipients using welfare system funds does enroll participants in the JTPA Title II-A program, but only if they are successful in finding a job. Although participation in these separate components may lead to subsequent JTPA enrollment by a subset of the individuals who are subsequently referred for the types of training provided under Title II-A, the welfare-funded employment and training units are essentially separate programs in these six SDAs.

A seventh SDA -- **SDA F** -- is also funded to provide a special service for AFDC recipients referred by the welfare system. However, in **SDA F**, the welfare-funded service component -- a week long assessment and an 8-day life skills curriculum --is considered by both the welfare system and the SDA to be enriched front-end services leading to subsequent participation in the regular JTPA program. This arrangement has led to a constant flow of AFDC clients into the regular JTPA II-A services.

Figure II-2

SDA Linkages with Work Programs for AFDC Recipients

SDA	SDA Linkage with Work Program for AFDC Recipients	Whether Work-Welfare Clients are Enrolled in JTPA
A	SDA administers separate program of remediation and pre-vocational skills for welfare clients functioning at or below fifth grade level	A separate set of service providers is used, and these work program clients are not dual enrolled in JTPA
C	SDA receives work-welfare funding to operate welfare reform program emphasizing classroom training	Clients are not dual enrolled in JTPA unless they use JTPA-funded OJT
D	SDA receives separate funding for employment and training services to welfare recipients; services include outstationed SDA staff, extra basic skills remediation, and lots of supportive services	Clients are not dual enrolled in JTPA unless they receive JTPA-funded OJT or CRT
E	SDA gets referrals for training from the state work-welfare program	Clients are enrolled in JTPA and generally receive 1 - 2 years CRT at local community college; JTPA depends on welfare system to provide supportive services during training
F	Work welfare program pays SDA to provide 1-week assessment and 8-day life skills curriculum for welfare referrals, and sends a constant stream of referrals	Welfare referrals are enrolled in JTPA after they complete the special extended assessment
H	SDA runs a special pre-vocational curriculum for welfare recipients (paid for by welfare) of 8 3-hr. sessions	Participants in pre-voc curriculum are not enrolled in JTPA and do not necessarily graduate to JTPA at the conclusion of this training

Figure II-2 (continued)

SDA	SDA Linkage with Work Program for AFDC Recipients	Whether Work-Welfare Clients are Enrolled in JTPA
I	Program receives referrals from welfare program	SDA actively leverages support services paid for by AFDC for JTPA trainees on welfare
J	SDA operates a separate unit with welfare funds that offers assessment, job club/job search assistance and referral to training	Clients only dual enrolled in JTPA after they have located employment
N	SDA administers basic skills remediation for AFDC recipients (funded with JTPA 8% funds); SDA also runs assessment unit for county work-welfare program	Not dual enrolled, unless trainees enter 78%-funded program
O	SDA reserves 130 slots in JTPA program for state work-welfare referrals, and serves additional voluntary welfare clients	Clients referred by welfare system are enrolled in JTPA

The remaining three SDAs with welfare system linkages do not have financial agreements supplementing JTPA II-A training funds for AFDC clients, although in one SDA a non-financial agreement includes a formal reservation of 130 training slots for AFDC clients in the local JTPA program. The primary funding linkage in these three SDAs is the use of child care and other supportive services paid for by the welfare system to support the trainee while in classroom training.

In summary, welfare system linkages seem to increase the ability of SDAs to respond to individuals needing enriched front-end services, including pre-employment services, basic skills remediation, job search training, and life skills training, as well as provide for on-going subsistence and child care supports for individuals participating on long-term training. The tendency to operate such services as a separate program rather than integrating them with Title II-A programs is somewhat disturbing, however. Although welfare clients in these SDAs have access to an enriched package of supportive services and front-end services, not much attention has been directed to making similar services available to meet the needs of other JTPA applicants. In addition, client flow from these pre-employment services to JTPA-funded occupational training programs does not appear to be encouraged by the present JTPA-welfare linkages.

Design of SDA Service Packages

The proposed criteria for quality training include:

- whether the SDA offers a sufficiently varied range of services to meet the needs of all JTPA-eligible applicants, and

- whether the SDA designs and delivers comprehensive individual training packages that addresses all participant barriers to employment.

The first part of this section describes the service elements that are offered in the case study SDAs, and how they are combined into service sequences for individual clients. The second part of this section assesses the extent to which SDAs have succeeded in putting together comprehensive service packages responsive to the needs of JTPA applicants with substantial employment barriers.

Because of the emphasis on employment as the identifiable outcome of a quality training process in this study, we have focused our attention on services oriented to adults and out-of-school youth, for which employment is the desired outcome at the conclusion of JTPA training. Thus, the remaining discussions of service designs do not address issues related to the design of programs for in-school youth.

Types of Services Provided

The kinds of services provided to participants in the case study SDAs fall into the following broad categories:

- training in a particular occupational skill, either in a classroom setting, or through an on-the-job training position with a specific employer;

- training in basic educational skills (i.e. reading and mathematics), either to achieve a General Equivalency Degree (GED) for individuals who never completed high school, or to brush up on specific basic skills needed before entering a specific occupational training curriculum remediation;

- pre-employment skills training, including any or all of the following:
  - -- personal survival skills training
  - -- self-assessment, motivational training
  - -- world-of-work training

-- time-limited work experience
-- job search skills training; and

- job development or direct job placement assistance, either for those who have completed other service components or as a stand alone service.

Figure II-3 summarizes the different services available across all 15 case study SDAs. Not surprisingly, all 15 SDAs provided occupational skills training. Thirteen of the fifteen SDAs provided some form of basic skills training for adults and the remaining two SDAs were planning to expand their services to add basic skills for adults during PY89. Eleven of the fifteen SDAs offered some pre-employment training to some portion of JTPA applicants or enrollees, and one additional SDA was planning to add this service in PY89. Nine of the fifteen SDAs offered direct placement assistance as a stand-alone service to some portion of their JTPA participants.

The objective of JTPA occupational training -- either classroom training or on-the-job training -- is to make the participant employable in a training-related job upon service completion. Therefore, it is not surprising that classroom training (CRT) and on-the-job training (OJT) formed the core of service offerings for adults in the majority of the SDAs visited. Many SDAs, however, felt that these services cannot stand alone. Increasing numbers of SDAs offer pre-employment training and basic skills remediation for adults, to enhance their clients' performance in more traditional training and to better prepare them for successful employment. The growing emphasis on basic skills remediation comes from an increasing realization that even adults with high school diplomas often lack the functional skills to perform adequately in the workplace.

Occupational skills training is received by the overwhelming majority of all terminees in eleven of the 15 SDAs visited. However, in four of the study SDAs, sizable numbers of JTPA participants do not participate in occupational skills training. These SDAs include SDA A,

Figure II-3

Services Offered in Case Study SDAs

SDA	Occupational Skills	Basic Skills	Pre-employment Training	Direct Placement
A	YES	YES Stand-alone & integrated with occ. skills	Part of group assessment workshop; SDA also runs pre-employment workshop for AFDC clients with welfare $s	YES: 37%
B	YES	Available from 8% set-aside	NO	NO
C	YES	YES	YES	YES: 25% - 50%
D	YES	Adult basic ed. mostly from 8% funds	NO	YES: a small amount
E	YES	YES	Part of group assessment workshop	YES: for those who get placement without OJT subsidy
F	YES	Available at no cost from comm. college	Funded with 8% funds; also provided to welfare recipients using special welfare funds	NO
G	YES	Starting in PY89, with 8% funds	YES	YES: separate direct placement contractor
H	YES	YES Integrated with occ. skills (78%); (78%); Separately using 8% funds	Provided to welfare recipients using special funding	NO

Figure II-3 (continued)

SDA	Occupational Skills	Basic Skills	Pre-employment Training	Direct Placement
I	YES	Available at no cost at community college	YES, as part of OJT pre-paration	NO (if appropriate for direct place-ment, placed by Job Service)
J	YES	NO, planned for PY89	NO, planned for PY89	YES: 60%
K	YES	YES	NO	NO
L	YES	Classroom training participants (with GED) may brush up basic skills at community college	Pre-employment content in week-long Job Club	YES: 20%
M	YES	A little, integrated with occ. skills (mostly for youth)	YES, as part of OJT preparation	NO
N	YES	Classroom training participants may receive tutoring	YES, as part of OJT preparation	YES (few)
O	YES	YES, combined with work experience or training	Work experience is available occ. training	YES: for those with 5+ yrs. work experience

where 37% of all adult terminees receive job search assistance only; **SDA C**, where from one-third to one-half of all adult terminees participate only in pre-employment training workshops and/or job search training workshops; **SDA G**, which operates a sizable direct job placement component for adults; and **SDA J**, where two-thirds of all adult terminees receive only an extensive assessment, followed by job search assistance.

Provision of Basic Skills Training. The provision of basic skills training for adults as a stand-alone service or as a distinct service component within a package of JTPA services is widespread among the SDAs in the case study sample and is an expanding area of service design and delivery. Eleven of the case study SDAs offer classroom training in basic skills to individuals enrolled in Title II-A using JTPA funds. Two of these eleven SDAs rely on 8% set-aside funds to pay for basic skills remediation, while the remaining nine SDAs pay for basic skills training out of 78% funds, or through a combination of 78% and 8% funds.

Of the four SDAs that did not provide basic skills training with JTPA funds at the time of the study, two had established strong referral linkages to provide basic skills remediation to JTPA participants at no cost through community college programs, and two were planning to add basic skills training for adults through expanded programs in PY 89.

Five of the 15 SDAs provide basic skills training to JTPA enrollees only as a complement to an occupational training curriculum, either as a separate but simultaneous service component to brush up basic skills while participating in classroom training (in three SDAs), or as part of an integrated basic skills-occupational skills curriculum (in two SDAs).

Another five SDAs offer several options for participation in basic skills training. In these SDAs, JTPA enrollees may receive basic skills training either as a stand-alone service or as a complement to an occupational skills training curriculum. Two of these SDAs offer integrated basic skills-occupational skills curricula as one service option.

Finally, three SDAs currently offer basic skills training only as a stand-alone service component, for individuals who need to improve their basic skills as preparation for entering a classroom training program, or who want to improve their basic skills and/or obtain a GED in order to improve their immediate employability. The two SDAs that were planning to add basic skills training for the first time in PY 89 also fell into this category.

Six of the twenty-six classroom training curricula sampled for inclusion in this study contained basic skills components as a major part of the training curriculum. Two of these training curricula were integrated basic skills-occupational skills curricula: a precision machinist training curriculum of variable length, and a 10-week nurse's assistant training program. One of the sampled curricula was a 6-month program combining classroom training in basic skills and work experience. Three of the sampled basic skills curricula provided basic skills remediation or GED preparation to adults on an open-entry/open-exit basis. Chapter III discusses the quality of the training and outcomes experienced by the participants in these basic skills programs.

Provision of Pre-employment Services. Pre-employment training is usually provided as part of another service. Part of the problem in describing how pre-employment services are provided arises because the term "pre-employment services" is an umbrella term covering a wide array of different services. Among the possible topics covered in pre-employment curricula are the following: practical training in money management, self-assessment and motivational training, world-of-work training, vocational exploration, time-limited work experience, and job search skills training.

Eleven of the 15 case study SDAs provide pre-employment training to some group of JTPA participants. Five of these SDAs provide pre-employment services as a part of orientation either to the JTPA program in general, or to the OJT service component. Two SDAs provide pre-employment training during group orientation workshops held for all applicants as an integrated part of the assessment and service planning

function. Three of the case study SDAs operate group orientations for individuals enrolled in the OJT component, and provide job search training and world-of-work skills to all participants in this component.

A second group of SDAs offer pre-employment services as a part of an expanded job search assistance component. One SDA covers self-image, vocational exploration, and world of work skills in a week-long curriculum which they label "Job Club," and which is integrated with a two-week supervised job search period. Another SDA offers survival skills training as part of its job development/job placement component. Another SDA in this group offers a three day pre-employment/job search training workshop.

A third group of SDAs offer pre-employment training as a stand-alone curriculum. Three SDAs provide special pre-vocational training curricula to welfare recipients using special funding from the welfare system. One of these SDA also operates a life-skills and pre-employment curriculum at a community college using 8% funds. An additional SDA offers a separate two-hour career development workshop for those without occupational goals.

The pre-employment curricula offered by SDAs appear to address real barriers to employment experienced by the JTPA client population. Challenges experienced by the case study SDAs in offering this training include: how to make clients perceive it as a useful service, rather than as a "waste of time" or delay in getting to the "real training", and how to ensure that the people who need this service the most will receive it.

Provision of Direct Placement Services. All of the SDAs in the case study sample offer job search assistance and job placement services to participants at the conclusion of occupational classroom training. In most SDAs, placement is the responsibility of the contractor that provides classroom training. A number of SDAs also have in-house job development/job placement units, which they can use to place individuals

not placed by the classroom training providers or individuals not retained by their OJT employer at the conclusion of training.

Job placement assistance is also provided to JTPA participants as a stand-alone service in nine of the 15 case study SDAs. In several SDAs, direct job placements are made by staff in an integrated OJT/direct placement service component, in which some individuals are placed in jobs without an employer subsidy (direct placements), and some individuals are placed in jobs with an OJT contract. In other SDAs, direct job placement is considered a separate service option for individuals considered inappropriate for OJT (because they have either too many or too few job skills). The proportion of adults receiving direct job placement assistance varied from less than 10% to more than 60% of all adult terminees in the case study SDAs for which this information was obtained.

The Relative Emphasis on OJT and CRT

Fourteen of the fifteen case study SDAs offered both occupational classroom training and on-the-job training. SDA A does not offer on-the-job training, since they have determined that local employers are willing to hire JTPA participants with skills in entry-level positions without a public subsidy. Furthermore, they have decided that classroom training will provide more benefits to participants without skills than OJT would have provided, in terms of increasing skill levels and providing an opportunity to obtain high quality jobs.

Figure II-4 summarizes the relative priority of OJT and CRT in the case study SDAs. Because we had data on the relative dollars expended on OJT and CRT in some locales, and data on the relative volume of terminees in other locales, Figure II-4 should only be used to assess the relative importance of each mode of training within each SDA, rather than to make detailed comparisons across SDAs.

As shown in Figure II-4, on-the-job training was the predominant training mode in four of the case study SDAs. OJT accounted for

Figure II-4

Relative Importance of CRT and OJT in the Case Study SDAs

SDA	On-the-Job Training	Occupational Classroom Training
A	Not offered	100% of trainees (About 66% of these are occupational training only; about 33% are occupational CRT combined with basic skills training)
B	50% of trainees 33% of dollars	50% of trainees 66% of dollars
C	33% of trainees More than 50% of dollars	66% of trainees Less than 50% of dollars
D	80% of trainees	20% of trainees
E	Slightly less than 50% of trainees	Slightly more than 50% of trainees
F	30% of trainees	70% of trainees
G	About 56% of trainees About 66% of dollars	About 43% of trainees About 33% of dollars
H	50% of trainees	50% of trainees
I	50% of trainees (Many OJT trainees simultaneously participate in part-time CRT)	50% of trainees
J	66% of trainees	33% of trainees
K	50% of trainees	50% of trainees
L	43% of trainees	57% of trainees
M	66% of trainees	33% of trainees
N	25% of trainees	75% of trainees
O	33% of dollars	66% of dollars (includes some dollars used for combined basic skills occ. skills curricula)

slightly more than half of all individuals receiving occupational skills training in **SDA G**, two thirds of the trainees in **SDA J** and **SDA M**, and 80% of all trainees in **SDA D**. Four of the case study SDAs provided CRT and OJT to roughly equal numbers of trainees. Classroom training was the predominant mode of occupational training in seven of the study SDAs, where it accounted for more than three-fourths of all occupational training in **SDA A** and **SDA N**, and roughly two-thirds of all occupational training in **SDA C**, **SDA F**, and **SDA O**. In the remaining two SDAs classroom training was provided to only slightly more trainees than was on-the-job training.

It was not always clear how the case study SDAs had made their decisions about what mix of classroom training and on-the-job training to provide. In many SDAs, the two training modes were interchangeable in terms of the occupations for which training was occurring, with substantial numbers of trainees receiving preparation in office skills, manufacturing processes, and health-related occupations through both OJT and CRT.

SDA decisions about how much on-the-job training to offer were influenced by the conditions in the local labor market, the "job readiness" of most JTPA applicants, the SDA's policies about the appropriate function of on-the-job training, the extent of applicant interest in immediate employment, and the other service options available to JTPA applicants. SDAs were more likely to emphasize OJT as a mode of occupational training:

- if they faced a loose labor market, in which JTPA applicants might not be as well prepared as other job seekers;

- if JTPA applicants tended to be almost job ready, without major barriers to employment, but not completely job ready (i.e., they needed the subsidized training period in order to become as productive as other new hires);

- if the PIC and SDA viewed OJT as a way to make the JTPA program attractive to the employer community, through the training subsidies provided to employers;

- if large numbers of JTPA applicants emphasized their interest in immediate employment and could not support themselves during training without earning a salary; or

- if the basic skills deficiencies of applicants prevented them from participating in classroom training in that SDA.

SDAs in areas of high unemployment tended to find OJT an appropriate mode of training, both because individuals applying to JTPA in these loose labor markets were more job-ready and because employers in those labor markets had more skilled job seekers to choose from and needed additional incentives to hire JTPA trainees.

However, two of the study SDAs that offered OJT to a majority of trainees had low unemployment rates. For the low unemployment rate SDAs, the emphasis on OJT seemed to be a historical holdover from an earlier period. In addition, OJT was attractive in SDAs with tight labor markets as being a short-term, low-risk, cost-effective service that would produce a high entered employment rate for the SDA.

Other SDAs emphasized OJT when most of their occupational classroom training had restrictive entry requirements, such as a GED or 8th grade reading level, and significant numbers of applicants could not qualify. OJT became the only training alternative for significant numbers of JTPA participants in these SDAs.

SDA decisions about how much occupational classroom training to offer were influenced by the availability of potential providers of classroom training, the costs of different classroom training curricula, the extent of JTPA applicant interest in classroom training, the basic skills levels required for entry into classroom training, and the skills

requirements of employment opportunities in the local labor market. SDAs were more likely to emphasize the provision of classroom training:

- if they had located classroom training providers with a demonstrated track record who could offer both training and placement services to JTPA participants;

- if classroom training providers were willing to design new curricula or modify curricula to ensure that the training would be appropriate for JTPA trainees (e.g., through shortening the curriculum or through designing the curriculum for students with a lower level of reading and math skills);

- if classroom training was available at reasonable costs, especially where JTPA did not have to pay the full cost of training, but could leverage other educational resources in the local community;

- if supportive services and/or living stipends could be made available to a significant number of JTPA applicants to support individuals during training (e.g., from welfare program funding, or from Pell grants);

- if occupational classroom training could be provided to individuals who had not completed high school or obtained a GED; or

- if employment opportunities existed in occupations for which individuals could be prepared through classroom training.

Four of the seven SDAs where more participants received classroom training than OJT were experiencing low unemployment rates. In the low unemployment rate environment, individuals applying to JTPA for assistance tended to have severe barriers to employment, as evidenced by

low basic educational skills, unstable work histories, or specific personal problems, such as emotional instability or histories of substance abuse problems. Given such a hard-to-serve clientele, these SDAs believed that CRT in occupational skills would be more likely to than OJT to lead to stable employment for most JTPA participants. In addition, the low unemployment rates meant that employers were clamoring for applicants, and the SDAs believed that the use of OJT as a subsidy was unnecessary.

The three SDAs with relatively high unemployment rates which still had a preference for CRT over OJT included: **SDA O**, whose participants are poorly prepared to compete in the new service economy, and which offers a number of combination basic skills and occupational skills training curricula; **SDA C** which runs a small OJT program integrated with its direct job placement component but tries to limit OJT to individuals who wouldn't be hired without the OJT subsidy; and **SDA E** which feels that classroom training offers trainees more solid career opportunities and higher entry wages than OJT.

Variations in Classroom Training

Occupational classroom training takes many forms in the case study SDAs. Figure II-5 summarizes the practices of the case study SDAs in terms of two dimensions: (1) whether they relied on individual referral (IR) to classroom training available in the community, or whether they funded class-size training programs; and (2) the range of educational prerequisites for entry into classroom training.

Most SDAs offer a range of classroom training options in terms of the extent of educational preparation required to enter training. For example, **SDA O** funds some occupational training curricula for individuals reading above the 9th grade level, some curricula for individuals reading between the 7th and 9th grade level (including curricula which combine basic skills training and occupational skills training), and a few occupational training curricula for individuals reading at less than a 7th grade level. Similarly, **SDA G** offers

Figure II-5

Variations in Classroom Training Across Case Study SDAs

SDA	Type of CRT Available	Entry Requirements
A	Mostly class-sized	Must read at 6th grade level; one program requires HS diploma
B	Mostly IR to vo-techs and proprietaries; some class-sized	Most but not all training requires HS diploma/GED
C	Mainly IR to comm. college	Most requires HS/GED
D	Mainly IR to public and proprietary schools	Most requires HS/GED
E	Mainly IR to community college	Need HS/GED; can get through SDA
F	About half class-sized, half IR	Most requires HS/GED and 10th grade reading
G	Mainly open entry/exit courses at skills center	Grade-level requirements range from 6th to 9th grade
H	Mostly IR to vo-tech, comm. colleges, public and proprietary schools	Grade-level entry skills requirements
I	Mainly IR to tech. college	Most requires HS/GED
J	Mostly IR to proprietary schools	Most requires HS/GED
K	Mostly IR to voc center	8th grade skills needed
L	Mostly IR to community college	HS/GED required for IR to community college; some class-size programs for dropouts
M	Mainly IR to vo-techs, proprietary, community college	Vo-techs don't require HS/GED
N	Mix of IR and class-sized at community college	HS diploma not required, but perception may be that it is
O	Mainly class-sized at proprietary schools	Grade level requirements range from below 7th through above 9th

different occupational training curricula oriented to individuals with reading/math scores at the 6th, 7th, and 9th grade levels. In contrast, six of the case study SDAs do not offer occupational classroom training to individuals who do not already have either a high school diploma or GED.

Four SDAs fund class-size training programs for some or all of their JTPA trainees, i.e., contracting with organizations to offer training in particular occupational areas to a group of JTPA participants. These programs tend to be training of relatively short duration (3 to 6 months, as opposed to 1 to 2 years) and to be designed especially with JTPA participants in mind. The SDAs that offered mostly class-sized training were middle to large central cities serving fairly large numbers of clients.

Ten of the 15 case study SDAs primarily use individual referrals to place JTPA enrollees into training programs run by community colleges, vocational technical schools, or proprietary schools. Sometimes JTPA clients are referred to training consisting of a typical academic schedule of classes requiring one to two years of attendance at a community college to complete the occupational curriculum or obtain the relevant certificate. In other cases, however, clients are referred to shorter, more intensive programs designed to make the individual employable as soon as possible.

Individual referral allows these SDAs to offer more kinds of training and to more carefully match the training to the needs and interests of the individual. SDAs that emphasize individual referral to classroom training were not tempted to refer people to training programs merely because they needed to fill a class offering. On the other hand, the SDAs where the available CRT consisted mostly of individual referral to existing offerings also had fairly high prerequisites for entry. This is usually due to the fact that existing schools set their own entry requirements; most of the post-secondary institutions to which JTPA participants were referred for training usually required a high school diploma or GED as a condition of entry.

A third mode of classroom training, which was not much used for occupational skills training in the SDAs we visited, but which was more widely used for providing basic educational skills training, is the operation of a "Skills Center" where clients can participate in a number of different occupational training curricula on an open entry/open exit, self-paced basis. **SDA G** used this mode by funding a skills center operated by the local school district. Although four of the individual occupational skills training curricula sampled for this study were organized according to an open entry/open exit model of training, this model was less frequently used in the case study SDAs than either class-sized offerings or individual referral to training programs with fixed participation schedules.

SDAs varied in the extent to which they utilized primarily public educational institutions to provide classroom training, primarily proprietary training schools, or a mix of the two. There seemed to be no consistent differences between the kinds of training offered by public and private providers, although there often were differences in the way these two kinds of providers operated. Most private providers offered intensive (5 days/week, 6 hours/day) training that could be completed in a fairly short time period (3-9 months), and operated on a year-round basis. Public providers, on the other hand, often operated on a school-year schedule of quarters or semesters, and offered typical school schedules: classes offered for a few hours several times a week. Completing coursework could take one to two years.

SDAs chose between private and public providers on the basis of which providers were more cost-effective, which offered the most occupationally-relevant training programs, and which were most responsive to the needs of JTPA enrollees. Few of the case study SDAs utilized non-profit community based organizations to provide occupational classroom training.

Twenty-two specific examples of occupational classroom training were selected for inclusion in the study. Because we selected training curricula in which relatively large numbers of JTPA enrollees

participated, the classroom training sample probably includes fewer curricula offered through individual referral and more curricula arranged especially for JTPA participants than classroom training as a whole. (The full classroom training sample is described in Chapter I, in Figure I-6.) Chapter III examines the extent to which these training programs meet the quality of training criteria, in terms of the quality of the match between clients and training curriculum, the quality of the training provided, and the quality of the employment outcomes achieved by program participants.

Availability of Supportive Services

Figure II-6 summarizes the types and amounts of supportive services that were available to Title II-A participants in the case study SDAs from JTPA funds. Five of the 15 SDAs provide little or no financial assistance to JTPA enrollees from JTPA funds for living expenses, transportation expenses, or child care costs. In these SDAs, participants must have other sources of support in order to participate in classroom training. Alternative funding sources for living costs and child care expenses include Pell Grants for individuals enrolled in long-term training at an approved educational institution, and cash assistance and supportive services from the welfare system for AFDC recipients.

Four SDAs in the case study sample are particularly active in providing JTPA financial support and child care assistance to participants in classroom training. Each of these four SDAs offers needs based payments ranging from $20 to $75 per week to participants in classroom training, and pays for child care expenses for participants in classroom training. (Two SDAs also help pay for child care during the first month of participation in on-the-job training.) Three of these four SDAs also offer bus passes or some form of transportation assistance to cover transportation costs while in training. While these supportive payments help cover the costs of training, JTPA resources, even in these active SDAs, are not sufficient to enable JTPA applicants without other means of support from participating in any but very short-term classroom training programs.

Figure II-6
Supportive Services Offered by Case Study SDAs (PY 88)

SDA	Needs-Based Payments	Transportation	Child Care	Other
A	$9 per day if no other income	Bus pass for assessment workshop and CRT	$75 per week per child for assessment and CRT	Tools and uniforms as needed
B	$0.80 to $1.00/hr for CRT participants			
C	Very few supportive services available, uses Pell Grants extensively			
D	SDA does not make supportive services available to participants using JTPA funds. However, extensive supportive services are available for welfare clients, whose service costs are also supported by work-welfare funds			
E	Maximum payment of $20/wk; CRT participants expected to use Pell Grants	Some assistance available; utilized by about 50% of trainees	Some assistance available; utilized by about 15% of trainees (average cost of $600 per child care recipient)	$20 incentive payment for each basic skills competency achieved
F	$25/week plus $1/hour of training			
G	$55 to $75/wk for CRT and job club participants		Day care covered for CRT during training; first 2 weeks covered for OJT	Payment to take and retake the GED; Cost of eye exams and glasses
H	10% of participants get needs based payments up to $20 per week; courses at vo tech school don't qualify for Pell Grants	Some assistance available; needed since main CRT provider is not accessible by public transit	Some help available at $1.50 per class hour	
I	Very little available; expected to use Pell Grants			
J	$5 to $15/day for CRT	SDA provides van to out-of-county training	Child care support for CRT participants; one month for OJT	Payments for tools or uniforms; Incentive payment of $75 for self-placements

Figure II-6 (continued)

SDA	Needs-Based Payments	Transportation	Child Care	Other
K	None	SDA reimburses for mileage for CRT; repairs for CRT and OJT		Tools may be supplied up to $300 limit
L	PIC has decided not to offer any supportive services to JTPA participants			
M	None	Some help available	$50 per week available, but budget is overspent	
N	$3/day for CRT		Available for CRT; for OJT, full for 1st month, 1/2 for next 2 mo.	$50 clothing allowance and $100 placement bonus also for clothing
O	Small payments available on a special needs basis	Bus passes available	Child care available for CRT	

Six SDAs in the case study sample offered moderate supportive service packages. These SDAs either offered some level of needs-related payments, but no transportation or child care assistance; or low levels of reimbursement for child care expenses with or without needs-related payments; or no needs-related payments.

In summary, the limited availability of JTPA supportive services reduced the attractiveness of classroom training to many applicants who were not on welfare or who could not be supported by another family member while in training. Some SDAs resolved this dilemma by aggressively pursuing Pell Grants for all classroom training participants. Others concentrated on recruiting welfare recipients into long-term classroom training programs. For some SDAs, the limited funding for needs related payments caused them to design twelve to sixteen week training programs, rather than longer training curricula.

Use of Service Combinations and Sequencing

In most of the SDAs visited, each of the identified service components -- on-the-job training, occupational classroom training, and basic skills training -- was considered a self-contained program and few opportunities were offered for JTPA participants to receive services from more than one component. The practice of thinking of each service as a stand-alone program was reinforced (1) by the limited training funds available to most SDAs, and their desire to serve as many of those applying for JTPA assistance as possible; (2) by the inability of most applicants to support themselves during an extended training period; and (3) by the practice of holding each service provider accountable for placing participants at the conclusion of each service.

In a number of the SDAs visited, however, attempts were being made to create linkages between services through simultaneous or sequential packaging of services for individual clients. These isolated practices are worthy of attention, because they provide models for improving the quality of JTPA training at the system level.

Several distinct types of service linkages were observed. One type of linkage that needs more attention in most of the SDAs visited is the linkage between basic skills training and occupational skills training. Although individuals may become more employable just by upgrading basic skills levels or earning a GED, such services may also be necessary preparation for training in a specific occupational area. If SDAs do not offer the opportunity for combining basic skills training with occupational skills training, then individuals with basic skills deficiencies cannot benefit from JTPA's occupational training services.

One group of basic skills training-occupational skills training linkages observed were sequential linkages. Three of the ten case study SDAs that offered basic skills training as a stand-alone service to JTPA participants emphasized sequential linkages between basic skills training and occupational skills training. **SDA A** consciously uses its basic skills program as a feeder into its occupational skills training program. **SDA F** and **SDA I**, both of which can access free basic skills training at a local community college for their participants, actively encourage individuals to complete basic skills training/GED programs and then to enter into occupational skills training. In **SDA K**, applicants to occupational classroom training programs can receive individual tutoring in basic skills from the community college until they reach the level needed to enter occupational skills training curricula. In the remaining seven SDAs that refer individuals with substantial basic skills deficiencies to adult education or GED programs, formal linkages apparently do not exist to encourage clients to transfer into occupational training at the conclusion of basic skills training.

Another group of linkages observed between basic skills training and occupational skills training were simultaneous linkages. Two different models were observed in SDA efforts to simultaneously provide basic skills training and occupational skills training. Five SDAs offer the option of simultaneous but separate basic skills remediation classes for individuals enrolled in classroom training programs, if they need extra help with reading or math skills. A second model, observed in

four SDAs, involved the design and delivery of integrated basic skills/occupational skills training programs.

In **SDA A**, 20% of adults participate in integrated basic skills-occupational skills programs. These special combined training programs are typically provided to individuals with reading scores between the 5th and 8th grade level. Training is available in occupations in the service, manufacturing, and office sectors.

In **SDA H**, a high school is funded to provide combination basic skills-occupational skills programs in the areas of food service, maintenance, and welding. These integrated combined curricula serve between 30 and 40 JTPA participants per year.

In **SDA M**, a private vocational school operates a combined occupational skills-GED curriculum for adult or youth drop-outs. The program, which is primarily oriented towards a youth population, offers training in two occupational areas -- retail sales and data entry. About 70% of the participants in the occupational training classes also work on GED preparation. GED preparation occurs during the mornings, and occupational training takes place during the afternoons.

SDA O recently developed curricula combining basic skills-work experience and basic skills-occupational skills training, in response to the low level of basic skills preparation in the JTPA applicant population. About one-third of their training funds are devoted to these combined curricula. By combining these curricula, the SDA hoped to (1) show clients more convincingly how improving basic skills could lead to a better job; and (2) offer an incentive for attendance in basic skills training. (Participants in the combined basic skills-work experience component cannot work and earn money in the afternoons if

they have not attended morning basic skills classes that day.) The SDA expects 75% of students in this curriculum to go on to further classroom training at the conclusion of this 6-month program, and 25% to enter employment.

A second type of linkage that was lacking in most SDAs, but was observed in a few isolated instances is the combination of classroom training and on-the-job training, through either simultaneous or sequential service delivery. Few SDAs had tapped the potential for using these two services in combination. As demonstrated in a few cases, OJT-CRT combinations have the potential to complement each other and overcome the potential weaknesses of each type of training when used separately. Among the potential weaknesses of classroom training are: (1) the inability of trainees to support themselves while they are participating in training and (2) the tendency of the training to be abstract, rather than clearly linked to the demands of a real job. One potential weakness of OJT is that it may provide training in skills specific to a single employer rather than generalizable skills. Using CRT and OJT in combination may prevent some or all of these weaknesses. Although combined classroom and on-the-job training is attractive in theory, the examples we observed didn't work that smoothly in practice.

SDA I has been actively promoting "OJT-linked" classroom training, using 8% funds, as a way to further enhance the long-term employability of OJT participants. In operational terms, this means that OJT contracts contain an agreement that the trainee will complete a class in a topic related to his or her OJT occupation, and will be released from work, if necessary, to attend this training. If employers accept this provision, the subsidized OJT period may be extended by a month or more. As an example of how this actually works, a 6-week OJT position at a child care center was linked to a 40 hour Early Childhood course offered at night at the community college. In practice,, however, a number of employers have been reluctant to grant release time for off-site training, and it has been hard in many cases to

schedule a single class that is relevant to the skills needed on the job.

In **SDA K**, classroom training and on-the-job training are often used in combination. In the example studied, two different classroom training programs in welding were used to complement OJT contracts at a new local manufacturing concern. Initially, when the firm was starting up, an 80 hour customized classroom training program was used to provide 60 workers with worker safety, blueprint reading, and basic math. Currently, a number of individuals are concurrently enrolled in a night class learning basic welding skills at the community college, as well as participating in on-the-job training with this large employer to acquire and practice more specific job skills.

SDA J had worked with local convalescent homes to develop a classroom training program to prepare participants to be certified nurse's assistants. This specially packaged program included having applicants "shadow" a certified nurse's assistant to make sure they were interested in this type of work, followed by 75 hours of classroom training in the evening, followed by 100 hours of clinical training under the supervision of the instructor during the day. Although the employers in this program cooperated with the supervised work experience, they did not receive an OJT subsidy, since they were not the training providers. Nevertheless, the participants were able to become employed at the beginning rather than the end of the training, and were paid for their clinical training as part of their regular working schedule.

Though most of the above examples are modest examples of service linkages, these attempts to link basic skills training and occupational skills training, and to link classroom training with on-the-job experience appeared to the field researchers to be among the most

innovative practices observed during the on-site investigations of the quality of JTPA training. However, they were not necessarily the highest quality programs we observed, in terms of clear training objectives, quality of training content, or quality of employment outcomes.

Quality of SDA Service Designs

The proposed criteria for assessing the quality of an SDA's service design include:

- whether the SDA has succeeded in offering services that enable JTPA applicants with substantial employment barriers to enroll in and benefit from the program; and

- whether the SDA offers appropriate service options for the least employable applicants and the most employable applicants to the program.

Responsiveness of Service Designs to the Needs of Hard-to-Serve Applicants. Figure II-7 summarizes the extent to which the service designs in the case study SDAs prepared them to address the needs of high risk or hard-to-serve adults, particularly adults with basic skills deficiencies. Among the possible positive indicators that an SDA's service package is responsive to the needs of hard-to-serve adults are the following:

- the SDA service package includes basic skills remediation as a service option for adults with basic skills deficiencies;

- classroom training in occupational skills can be accessed by individuals with less than a high school education or basic skills deficiencies;

Figure II-7

Summary of the Extent to Which SDA Service Design
Is Responsive to the Needs of Hard-to-Serve Adults
(Program Year 1988)

SDA	Availability of Basic Skills Training for Adults	Accessibility of Classroom Training to Those Without GED	Existence of Special Projects for Hard-to-Serve Groups	Availability of Needs Based Payments or Child Care	Provision of Substantial Services to Hard-to-Serve	Total Count
A	YES	YES		YES	YES	4
B	YES		YES	YES	YES	4
C	YES					1
D	YES				YES	2
E	YES			YES	YES	3
F	YES			YES	YES	3
G		YES		YES	YES	3
H	YES	YES		YES	YES	4
I	YES	YES	YES		YES	4
J				YES		1
K	YES	YES			YES	3
L		YES				1
M		YES		YES	YES	3
N		YES	YES	YES	YES	4
O	YES	YES		YES	YES	4

- there are special projects for hard-to-serve groups funded with JTPA funds or used for JTPA enrollees;

- the SDA offers needs related payments or child care subsidies to participants in classroom training; and

- the hardest to serve applicants are usually routed to a "substantial" service (i.e., something other than job search training and direct placement).

A detailed description of the program design features oriented to hard-to-serve clients in all fifteen case study SDAs is included in Appendix B to this report. Figure II-7 assesses all 15 SDAs in the study sample on each of these five indicators, and includes a summary count of the number of positive indicators of service responsiveness were met by each SDA.

As shown in Figure II-7, none of the case study SDAs met all of the indicators of responsiveness to the needs of adults with basic skills deficiencies or other hard-to-serve groups. Six SDAs met four indicators, five SDAs met three indicators, and four SDAs met only one or two of the five indicators.

It is interesting to review the ratings of the four SDAs that had identified one or more hard-to-serve adult group as a priority for targeting with JTPA services. Two of these SDAs with designated priority target groups -- **SDA A** and **SDA B** -- received high ratings on the indicators of service responsiveness, but the remaining two SDAs -- **SDA E** and **SDA J** -- received lower ratings on the responsiveness indicators (meeting only 3 and 1 indicators, respectively). It is also interesting to note that four of the SDAs which received especially high ratings for having service designs responsive to the needs of hard-to-serve adults had not formally established priority target groups within the JTPA-eligible adult population.

These findings further support the earlier finding that many SDAs are not providing strong leadership in directing JTPA resources to the hardest-to-serve groups within the JTPA-eligible population. Thus, if the case study SDAs are representative of the nation in this respect, the decision to leave client targeting decisions up to SDAs has resulted in a commitment to orient the JTPA program toward the hardest to serve clients in only a few localities. In most SDAs, client targeting has been interpreted as passively attempting to achieve equitable service goals, with only mixed success in designing service offerings responsive to the needs of hard-to-serve adults.

Appropriateness of Service Options for Most Employable and Least Employable Applicants. Another element of the quality of the service mix is how SDAs channel individuals with different needs to different types of services. Most often, the case study SDAs had formal criteria about which types of services were appropriate for individuals with the greatest employment barriers, and which types of services were appropriate for individuals with the fewest employment barriers. For example, SDA I decided that individuals without high school diplomas or GEDs should be given a series of incentives to get their GEDs. Thus, in this SDA individuals were strongly encouraged to complete their GED prior to entering either occupational classroom training or on-the-job training. This policy was consistent with the SDA's determination that basic skills deficiencies were an important barrier to a productive workforce in the state. Its effect, however, was to limit access to occupational skills training and to restrict the JTPA service options available to the least employable individuals to basic skills training or pre-employment training/direct placement services.

SDAs in the case study sample varied widely in the extent to which they emphasized classroom training for the least employable JTPA applicants, or reserved classroom training for individuals who already had a high school diploma, GED, or could demonstrate basic skills competencies. Nine of the 15 case study SDAs designed at least some occupational classroom training curricula that were appropriate for individuals reading at less than the ninth grade level. In at least

four of these SDAs this was the result of one or more "class-size" curricula designed and introduced especially for JTPA applicants with basic skills limitations. In the remaining six SDAs, occupational classroom training was an "exclusive" rather than an "inclusive" service option, reserved for those without basic skills limitations.

In nine of the 14 SDAs in the case study sample that offered on-the-job training as one of the available service options, OJT was considered an appropriate service for individuals with limited work experience or basic skills limitations, while six SDAs tried to channel less employable applicants towards some other service option. However, the six SDAs that tried to discourage on-the-job training for less job ready applicants did so from very different motives. In one SDA, less job ready applicants were discouraged from OJT because the SDA wanted them to improve their basic skills and get their GED before entering employment. In the other SDAs, applicants were discouraged from OJT because the SDA wanted to deliver only "job ready" individuals to OJT employers.

Job search assistance, job development, or direct job placement services is a service option in nine of the 15 SDAs in the case study sample, although it receives little emphasis in some SDAs and much greater emphasis in others. What is important to note, however, is that job search assistance is a residual service offered to less employable individuals in six SDAS where either classroom training or OJT or both are reserved for individuals with fewer employment barriers. At the other extreme, two SDAs try to channel only individuals with substantial employment experience (3 to 5 years work experience) to the direct job placement option. Another SDA tries to reserve direct job placement for more job ready applicants, while encouraging less employable individuals to participate in classroom training programs that have been specially designed with the needs of hard-to-serve adults in mind.

The criteria for quality training do not attempt to prescribe which services an SDA should use for more employable individuals and which services they should use for individuals with greater barriers to

employment. Nevertheless, one criterion is that there should be sufficient services available to meet the needs of different groups of JTPA applicants. Figure II-8 summarizes the range of services considered appropriate in each SDA for individuals at these two extremes.

The real question in assessing the adequacy of the available service options in each SDA is not whether one specific service is used for harder-to-serve clients in that SDA, but whether, taken as a whole, individuals with more employment barriers have any substantial services to choose from.

In six of the fifteen SDAs, both occupational classroom training and on-the-job training are available to individuals who have significant employment barriers. In another four SDAs, either occupational classroom training or on-the-job training, but not both, are available to less employable individuals. (In three of these SDAS, classroom training is "exclusive" and OJT is "inclusive"; while in the other SDA the reverse is true.)

The most serious problem in meeting this quality of training criterion occurs in the four SDAs where both occupational classroom training and on-the-job training are reserved for individuals without serious basic skills deficiencies and stable employment histories. Two of these SDAs also lack basic skills remediation as a service option for adults. In these two SDAs, the hardest to employ individuals often have no service option besides job search skills training or direct placement assistance. The other two SDAs in this category have thought extensively about the service needs of individuals with basic skills deficiencies, and have decided that these individuals should be strongly encouraged to attend basic skills training to get a GED and upgrade their basic skills. The unanswered question for these SDAs is whether basic skills training is a "dead-end" service, or whether it is part of a sequence of services leading to an employment oriented service at the conclusion of basic skills training. While SDA I tries to encourage sequencing from basic skills training to occupational skills training,

Figure II-8

Range of Service Options Available for Least Employable and Most Employable Applicants in the 15 Case Study SDAs

KEY

LESS: Service available and considered appropriate for less employable applicants

MORE: Service available and considered appropriate for more employable applicants

BOTH: Service available and considered appropriate for applicants, regardless of job readiness

NA: Service not available

SDA	Basic Skills Training	Occupational Classroom Training	OJT	Job Search/ Direct Placement	Other
A	LESS	BOTH	NA	MORE	
B	LESS	IR: MORE Class: LESS	BOTH	NA	
C	LESS	MORE	MORE	BOTH	Work Exper.: LESS Pre-voc: BOTH
D	LESS	IR: MORE Class: LESS	BOTH	BOTH	
E	LESS	MORE	BOTH	MORE	
F	LESS	MORE	BOTH	NA	Pre-voc: LESS
G	NA	BOTH	MORE	LESS	
H	LESS	MORE	BOTH	NA	Pre-voc: LESS
I	LESS	MORE	MORE	NA*	Pre-voc: BOTH
J	NA	MORE	MORE	LESS	
K	LESS	BOTH	BOTH	NA	
L	MORE	IR: MORE Class: LESS	MORE	LESS	Pre-voc: LESS
M	NA	LESS	BOTH	NA	
N	MORE	IR: MORE Class: LESS	BOTH	LESS	
O	LESS	BOTH	BOTH	MORE	Work exper.: LESS

*In this SDA, an integrated intake is done by Job Service and JTPA. Applicants appropriate for direct placement become Job Service clients.

the ultimate result, ironically, may be a narrowed, rather than an enriched set of service options facing the least job ready applicants to JTPA.

In summary, the balance of service options across the case study SDAs does not appear to be a cause for alarm in most cases. Nevertheless, a distinction can be made between SDAs that have designed their service programs with a "unitary strategy" in mind, and SDAs that have designed their service programs with a "divided strategy" in mind. A "unitary" strategy involves the development of a service mix that is intended to enable all JTPA enrollees, including those with the greatest employment barriers, to become productive workers and be attractive to employers by the time they finish the program. SDAs following a unitary strategy try to achieve quality jobs at placement (or at least opportunities for advancement) for all or most JTPA participants.

If an SDA is following a "divided strategy," on the other hand, it tries to offer something to the least employable individuals requesting assistance from JTPA, but limits the amount of investment in these individuals, and does not necessarily expect these individuals to be as successful in obtaining employment as more employable individuals. A sizable portion of the JTPA training investment in an SDA following a divided strategy goes towards serving more job-ready individuals, whom local employers will be most willing to hire, and who will make the SDA look good on the performance standards by obtaining quality jobs.

From the perspective of the model of quality JTPA training, a balance needs to be achieved in designing services and matching clients to services that will permit as many individuals as possible to enjoy long-term employability gains from the program. Serving hard-to-serve applicants is of value, as long as the services provided are substantial enough to enable them to be more successful members of the workforce as a result of JTPA participation. Providing employers with job ready workers is of value, as long as the trainees become even better workers as a result of JTPA participation, are assisted in obtaining jobs that are higher quality than the jobs they would have been able to obtain without the JTPA investment.

SDA INFLUENCE ON DIRECT CLIENT SERVICES

Organizational Responsibility for "Front-End" Services

A number of different organizational patterns were used by the case study SDAs for the delivery of the "front-end" services of client assessment, intake, development of an individual service plan, and assignment to a specific service. Figure II-9 describes the arrangements used by each of the 15 study SDAs.

Six SDAs retain all the front-end service functions at the SDA level, and operate a centralized intake unit with SDA staff. In five of these SDAs the SDA intake unit has sole responsibility for developing a service plan for each JTPA applicant and enrolling the applicant in a specific training program. In the sixth SDA, the service providers screen all referred applicants and make the final decision about whether to enroll the applicant in the designated training program.

Three additional SDAs also use a centralized design for providing assessment services and developing individual service plans, but make use of specialized contractors to operate part or all of the assessment and service planning functions.

> In **SDA E** an outside contractor is used to provide a week-long assessment workshop including vocational exploration and skills testing for JTPA applicants who already have their GED or high school diploma, while SDA staff provide a shorter in-house assessment for high school dropouts. The SDA retains responsibility for intake, enrollment, and development of individual service plans for all applicants.

Figure II-9

Agency Responsible for Assessment and Development of Individual Service Plan

SDA	Assessment	Development of Service Plan/ Assignment to Services
A	SDA	SDA
B	SDA	SDA develops plan and refers clients; providers have final say on whether to enroll.
C	SDA	SDA
D	SDA	SDA
E	Centralized assessment contractor for those with GED; SDA assesses dropouts in-house	SDA
F	SDA	SDA
G	One assessment contractor for those who want classroom training; one assessment contractor for all others	SDA
H	SDA assesses OJT referrals; CRT providers assess CRT referrals	SDA develops plan and refers clients; providers have final say on whether to enroll
I	SDA does assessment; Service providers do more detailed assessment	SDA develops plan and refers clients; providers have final say on whether to enroll

Figure II-9 (continued)

SDA	Assessment	Development of Service Plan/ Assignment to Services
J	SDA	SDA
K	Centralized intake contractor and CRT providers	Centralized contractor makes referral to CRT; CRT provider determines what curriculum is appropriate
L	Service providers	Service providers
M	SDA, plus additional additional assessments by CRT providers in some cases	SDA
N	SDA does assessment for OJT; CRT providers do own assessment	Community college does own service planning and enrollment; SDA makes referrals to other CRT providers
O	SDA and service providers	SDA

In **SDA G**, the SDA operates a centralized intake and service planning unit. However, the SDA refers all applicants interested in classroom training to an outside contractor for a more detailed 4-hour assessment, in order to determine whether applicants are appropriate for the particular classroom training curriculum they want to enroll in.

In **SDA K**, the SDA contracts the entire centralized intake, assessment, and service planning unit to a single contractor, which operates the OJT training program directly, and makes referrals to another provider for classroom training.

The remaining six SDAs share the responsibility for assessment and service planning with their individual service providers. In two of these SDAs, SDA staff are solely responsible for assessment and service planning for individuals who want on-the-job training (which these SDAs administer directly). Individuals interested in classroom training participate in an initial SDA intake interview, but are referred to individual providers for assessment, development of detailed service plans, and enrollment.

Three of the six SDAs which share assessment and service planning with their service providers operate a two-phased assessment and service planning process. The SDA conducts an initial assessment of clients needs and interests, and makes the first assignment to a particular service provider. Individual classroom training providers then conduct more detailed assessments and determine which classroom training curriculum is appropriate for the applicant.

The final SDA assigns the total responsibility for intake, assessment, development of service plans, and enrollment to each of its service providers. (This SDA contracts out all direct client services to various service providers.)

In summary, the case study SDAs retained substantial responsibility for each of the "front-end" client services at the SDA level, reflecting their interest in ensuring that all segments of the eligible population had an opportunity to apply for all the available JTPA services, and that applicants were referred to the services that were most appropriate to their needs. In those cases where the case study SDAs delegated responsibilities for assessment and assignment to services to third parties, they selected contractors in which they had great confidence, and which could be trusted not to undermine the SDA's client priorities. For example, **SDA L**, which delegated the total responsibility for client outreach, assessment, service planning, and enrollment to its service providers, had as providers four local community colleges, and three district offices of the state Job Service. Similarly, **SDA K**, which depended on a single centralized intake contractor to develop service plans and make referrals to training, had delegated this function to the local office of that state's Job Service.

The negotiation of separate assessment contracts with third party contractors was an interesting variant which extended the SDA's ability to do an intensive assessment in three SDAs, while still enabling the SDA to retain control over the service planning and service referral process.

The Quality of Assessment

The quality training criterion that is relevant to SDA assessment practices is:

- whether the SDA or service provider staff have assessed applicant strengths and weaknesses to develop an appropriate service plan.

This section describes SDA assessment practices and assesses the extent to which they meet the quality of training criterion.

The major distinctions in rating assessment practices across SDAs appear to be:

- whether the assessment is purely subjective (i.e. based only on a personal interview with an assessment counselor) or whether it utilizes objective instruments;

- if the assessment uses basic skills assessment instruments, whether the assessment uses "quick and dirty" reading and math tests (like the Job Corps reading test) or whether it uses more comprehensive basic skills inventories (like the TABE);

- whether the assessment includes career exploration or career interest inventories for some or all JTPA applicants, but particularly for those who are not sure what career they are interested in;

- what portion of SDA applicants receive the full package of assessment services, and what groups receive shorter, more perfunctory assessment; and

- whether the results of the assessment are used in developing the service plan (some reading tests are given because they are required, but the results are not used in any way);

Figure II-10 summarizes the assessment practices utilized across the different case study SDAs. Using the information abstracted in Figure II-9, the fifteen case study SDAs can be assigned to three groups: (1) those with primarily subjective assessment procedures, (2) those with detailed objective assessment procedures, and (3) those that delegate the responsibility for assessment to individual service providers.

Figure II-10

Description of SDA Assessment Practices

SDA	Extensive Assessment	Basic Skills Assessment	Vocational Exploration/ Interest/ Aptitude	Other Content of Assessment	Who Gets Full Assessment	Who Gets Little or No Assessment	How Assessment is Used
A	YES	Detailed basic skills tests	Vocational skills and interests	3 1/2 days: includes self awareness employability job search skills	All applicants interested in training	Applicants who want placement assistance only	To select appropriate classroom training (e.g. basic skills vs. occupational training)
B	NO	Job Corps reading test	NO		All applicants		Used to select best service
C	NO	Job Corps reading test; community college does more intensive testing	GATB used if no clear goals	2 hour career development workshop available; 3 day front-end job search training	Everybody gets counselor appointment and reading test	CRT applicants and those with waiting job do not receive job search training	To assign to best service; community college uses tests to determine whether basic skills courses are needed along with regular occup. curriculum.
D	NO	Job Corps reading test	Automated form of GATB used if undecided (Apticom)		All JTPA applicants		To make service assignment
E	YES	TABE	GATB and voc exploration	Job search skills	All high school grads/GED get full 1 week assessment by contractor	Dropouts get 1 day assessment by SDA; also short assessment if OJT "reverse referral"	Full assessment: to screen for CRT; Short assessment: to make service assignment (other than OJT)

Figure II-10 (continued)

SDA	Extensive Assessment	Basic Skills Assessment	Vocational Exploration/ Interest/ Aptitude	Other Content of Assessment	Who Gets Full Assessment	Who Gets Little or No Assessment	How Assessment is Used
F	YES	TABE	NO, but voc interest testing available by referral		If interested in CRT or undecided	If interested in OJT or has low academic achievement, then subjective "mini" assessment	Full assessment: to screen for CRT; short assessment: to make service assignment (other than CRT)
G	YES	Extensive testing by contractor	Occupational skills testing		Full 4 hr. assessment if interested in CRT; Service providers must administer reading test to all enrollees	If not interested in CRT, SDA gives subjective assessment interview	Full assessment: to determine whether appropriate for CRT; short assessment: to make service assignment (other than CRT)
H	NO, not at SDA level	CRT providers use TABE for screening; OJT providers sometimes use TABE vocabulary test	NO		All JTPA applicants get minimal SDA assessment		Not used for much

Figure II-10 (continued)

SDA	Extensive Assessment	Basic Skills Assessment	Vocational Exploration/ Interest/ Aptitude	Other Content of Assessment	Who Gets Full Assessment	Who Gets Little or No Assessment	How Assessment is Used
I	NO, not at SDA level	Not at SDA level; service providers do more detailed assessment	NO		All JTPA applicants are assessed by a "roving" SDA intake worker; particular service providers do additional testing		Not used for much
J	YES	TABE	Vocational interest test; vocational exploration	Job search skills self-awareness (3 day workshop)	All JTPA applicants		Used to determine best service assignment
K	YES	Not at SDA level; CRT provider does testing	GATB; can also include career interest inventory		If interested in CRT or undecided	If interested in OJT, receive minimal subjective counseling	Used to determine what occupational area CRT referral should be made to
L	NO-OJT NO-Class-Size CRT YES-IR CRT	Job Corps reading test used by all providers: Community college uses basic skills	NO		All service providers do their own assessment; individual referral to CRT uses formal tests	OJT and class-size CRT assessment is subjective	CRT assessment used to determine need for basic skills remediation
M	NO	Basic math and vocabulary test given by SDA; some providers use TABE	Not at SDA level; some providers use GATB and career interest test		All JTPA applicants get minimal SDA assessment interview		

Figure II-10 (continued)

SDA	Extensive Assessment	Basic Skills Assessment	Vocational Exploration/ Interest/ Aptitude	Other Content of Assessment	Who Gets Full Assessment	Who Gets Little or No Assessment	How Assessment is Used
N	YES	Not at SDA level; CRT providers do own assessment and screening	4 hour workshop for OJT applicants on career interests, barriers	Job search skills	All OJT applicants get SDA workshop		More direct service than assessment; enables SDA to assess realism of career goals
O	YES	TABE, for CRT applicants; brief reading test for all applicants	GATB, for CRT applicants		CRT applicants get GATB/TABE; CRT providers do more detailed assessment	All JTPA applicants get brief reading test	Selection of appropriate training

Group I: SDAs with Primarily Subjective Assessment Procedures. Six of the 15 SDAs in the case study sample provide a primarily subjective assessment to all JTPA applicants, in the form of a brief face-to-face meeting between the applicant and an SDA counselor. At these counseling sessions, SDA intake counselors generally inquire about the applicant's previous work experience and occupational interests, and orient the applicant to the various service options available. At the conclusion of the meeting, a decision is usually made about whether the applicant will enter one of the JTPA service components, an official Employability Development Plan (EDP) is prepared, and a referral to a specific service is made.

Three of the six SDAs with primarily subjective assessment procedures do include a brief reading test for all applicants as part of the assessment session. (The Job Corps reading test was used in each of these three SDAs.) One of the six SDAs uses a brief math and vocabulary test as part of the assessment session. In general, however, these brief objective tests are not very influential in determining which services the applicant will receive in these SDAs, and seem to be more oriented to meeting the federal requirement to report reading level on the JASR reporting form than to any practical use in determining the appropriate service match for a given applicant.

Two of the six SDAs with primarily subjective assessment procedures will also administer the General Aptitude Testing Battery (GATB) to applicants who are undecided about what occupational path to follow. However, none of these six SDAs include vocational exploration, vocational interest tests, or vocational skills testing as part of the assessment process.

In three of the six SDAs with primarily subjective assessment procedures at the SDA level, service providers use additional objective assessment tests after the service referral has been made. The most frequently used basic skills test used by service providers is the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). At the service provider level, objective basic skills assessments are used for two reasons: (1) to

enable service providers to screen applicants for a particular occupational skills curriculum, to make sure they are an appropriate referral; and (2) to alert service providers to the need to address basic skills deficiencies as part of the occupational skills curriculum. However, since this information is secured only after the individual has been referred by the SDA to a particular training program, the SDA's ability to make appropriate referrals is weakened.

If both the SDA and the service provider use only subjective and superficial assessment methods, two types of inappropriate matches between applicant and training curriculum are likely to occur. The first type of inappropriate match happens when the applicants' basic skill level is not sufficient to meet the demands of a particular classroom training curriculum. One example of such a problem was observed in **SDA B**, where a JTPA trainee who read below the 7th grade level was struggling to complete a computer operator training program because she couldn't read the manuals used in the training curriculum. (In this SDA, the SDA counselor uses only a quick Job Corps reading assessment test, and the service provider requires a high school diploma or GED but does not do any extensive objective basic skills testing to screen SDA referrals.)

The second type of inappropriate match between client and training curriculum can occur when an applicant who lacks a clear sense of occupational goals agrees to participate in a program without first completing a career exploration exercise or occupational interest or aptitude test. In such a case the trainee can successfully complete a classroom training program, and can discover, too late, that the occupational field is not well suited to his/her interests.

Group II: SDAs with Detailed Objective Assessment Procedures. Another seven SDAs in the case study sample use detailed objective tests as part of the assessment process provided by the SDA. However, five of these seven SDAs provide full assessments to only a portion of all JTPA applicants. Four SDAs provide full assessments only to those interested in classroom training. (One of these SDAs also provides a full

assessment to those who are undecided about their occupational goals.) One SDA (SDA E) limits its full assessment to applicants who have a GED or high school diploma (which is usually a prerequisite for access to classroom training in this SDA). The sixth SDA operates a three-day assessment workshop as the front-end service received by all JTPA applicants.

The individuals who are excluded from the full assessment in these SDAs are usually provided with a subjective counseling session like the JTPA applicants in Group I (described above). However, SDA E, although it provides a shorter assessment to dropouts than it does to high school graduates, still spends a full day on assessment of the skills of dropouts. The difference in SDA E is that dropouts are assessed in-house by the SDA staff, while applicants with a high school diploma or GED are referred to a specialized assessment contractor for a one-week long assessment and vocational exploration curriculum.

All six SDAs with detailed objective assessment procedures conduct an extensive assessment of applicants' basic skills. The TABE is the test most often used by these SDAs. However, the purpose of the basic skills assessment varies substantially from SDA to SDA, depending on whether the SDA has oriented its occupational classroom training program to meet the needs of individuals with basic skills deficiencies, and whether basic skills training is available as a "stand alone" curriculum.

The four SDAs in this group that offer a basic skills training option use the detailed assessment to determine which of the CRT applicants should be encouraged to participate in basic skills training. The three SDAs in this group that have at least some occupational classroom training oriented to individuals with basic skills limitations use the detailed assessment to make appropriate referrals to different occupational classroom training programs. In all SDAs, another purpose of the detailed assessment is to screen individuals who are interested in a particular occupational training class, to make sure that they meet the recommended or required basic skills prerequisites for that class.

Only one of the six SDAs in Group II--SDA J--does not offer either a basic skills curriculum or an occupational classroom training curriculum oriented to individuals with limited academic achievement. We identified a logical inconsistency in SDA J between the high level of resources devoted to assessment (which is provided to all JTPA applicants in this SDA) and the absence of service options to address the employment barriers revealed by the assessment.

In addition to providing a detailed assessment of basic skills levels, the assessments provided to JTPA applicants in several of the Group II SDAs are designed to explore vocational goals and enable those without clear occupational aims to select an appropriate training program. Three of the six SDAs include vocational interest tests, or vocational exploration exercises as part of the assessment process. Another SDA that does not offer vocational interest tests itself will make referrals to a nearby vocational center where such tests can be obtained. Of the three SDAs in this group without vocational interest tests or vocational exploration in their assessment package, two administered the GATB test to try to achieve a good match between aptitudes and occupational curricula, and one used a contractor to assess occupational skills prior to the assignment to a particular occupational training curriculum.

The Group II SDAs invested substantial resources in detailed assessment procedures, and, unlike the Group I SDAs, usually used the information from the assessments to make good matches between applicants' needs and the available service options. Yet we were disappointed in two aspects of their assessment procedures. First, except for the three SDAs that offered vocational interest tests or vocational exploration, even these SDAs seemed to take it for granted that JTPA applicants could make a good choice about future vocational goals without much assistance. This did not seem to be supported by the individual case histories we reviewed in many SDAs.

Further, even the SDAs that included vocational interest or vocational exploration content in their assessment program usually

reserved it for individuals applying to classroom training, and did not offer it to the individuals who wanted immediate job placements or on-the-job training. Our field observations and case file reviews suggest that a number of the individuals participating in OJT in the case study SDAs lacked a clear sense of occupational goals, and were characterized by unstable work histories (a number had never held a previous job for longer than a year).

In addition, communication about and coordination of assessment practices between SDAs and individual service providers appears to be weak in two of the SDAs, where service providers conduct their own independent detailed assessments of referred clients.

Group III: SDAs that Delegate Assessment to Service Providers. The final group of two SDAs delegated the responsibility for assessment to their service providers. In these SDAs, assessment is used to determine whether clients are appropriate for the program to which they were referred (or by which they were recruited), rather than to determine which of the programs available in the SDA are most appropriate for the individual.

At a minimum, service providers in these SDAs do the required reading test to generate data on basic skills deficiencies for the JASR. As in the Group I SDAs, CRT providers often do extensive testing to screen applicants for appropriateness for particular curricula. OJT participants are generally provided with less detailed assessments. The one exception is noteworthy. In **SDA N**, the SDA conducts a four-hour assessment workshop for applicants to the OJT program (which is operated directly by the SDA). The content of this workshop includes segments on career interests and employment barriers, and is oriented to ensuring that individuals seeking on-the-job training positions have realistic employment goals at the outset.

Summary of Findings on Assessment Practices. A number of SDAs use subjective assessment procedures for all JTPA applicants, consisting usually of a brief face-to-face interview with an SDA intake counselor.

Short reading tests are administered in these SDAs to meet the JASR reporting requirement, but they have little effect on the development of individual service plans. The result is that the decision about what service is most appropriate for a given applicant is often made without the benefit of detailed information about basic skills deficiencies. Such practices have led to mismatches between the abilities of the applicant and the skills needed to succeed in skills training.

A second group of SDAs utilize more detailed objective assessments. These assessments enable the SDA to refer applicants to basic skills training when needed, and to make appropriate occupational classroom training referrals. Few SDAs, however, give applicants the opportunity to conduct investigations of different occupational fields, or to explore occupational interests or aptitudes, as part of the assessment process. Field observations suggest that an increased utilization of these techniques would give participants a clearer sense of occupational goals, and would improve client satisfaction with the selected occupations. In addition, most SDAs provide a full assessment only to those applicants seeking classroom training, thereby excluding some of the hardest to serve individuals from the assessment process.

Another serious problem with assessment practices in the SDAs we visited is that there is little communication between SDAs and service providers about the results of assessments that have been performed. Thus, service providers frequently duplicate the efforts of the SDAs when they screen clients referred for classroom training.

Quality of Individual Service Planning

In order to support the provision of quality training, an SDA should ensure that:

- applicants are directed to the particular services or projects that are most appropriate to their individual circumstances, and that applicants not appropriate for JTPA-funded services are referred to alternative services.

This section describes SDA practices for developing individual service plans and assesses the extent to which they meet this quality of training criterion.

Twelve of the fifteen SDAs in the case study sample retain responsibility for developing individual service plans at the SDA level. Of the three remaining SDAs, one has delegated the responsibility for developing service plans to each individual service provider. Another retains the responsibility for developing service plans for most providers, but delegates the responsibility for service planning to its largest classroom training provider. The third SDA delegates the service planning responsibility to a centralized intake service provider.

The tool usually used to match clients to services in the JTPA system is the Employability Development Plan, commonly referred to as the "EDP". In theory, this plan enables a counselor who is thoroughly familiar with a individual's situation to document information about individual applicants' abilities, interests, past work experience, and any barriers to training and employment (such as disabling conditions, child care difficulties, work limitations). Using this information about the client, the individual responsible for developing a service plan is supposed to assist the applicant in designing a comprehensive package of appropriate services that will address the barriers to employment and enable the applicant to enter a job in a field agreed upon by the counselor and the applicant. The plan is usually signed by the applicant as a sign of client agreement to enter the program and work toward the goals stated in the plan. Finally, the plan is supposed to be updated as the individual moves through the service system and to provide the standard against which client progress is monitored, and client outcomes are compared.

Unfortunately, this model of the ideal EDP process bears little resemblance to the service planning process we observed in most of the case study SDAs. The total extent of the contact between a JTPA applicant and his or her counselor is usually a one-time face to face

meeting lasting at most one hour. During this counseling session, the SDA staff member either administers basic skills tests or reviews the results of objective tests previously administered, talks with the client about his/her occupational interests and goals, briefly reviews the individual's work history, and discusses the various JTPA service options appropriate for the applicant. Most often, the counselor does not question the client's choice of training mode (OJT or CRT) or selected occupational area. Thus the role of the counselor is often limited to describing the available service options, and determining whether the client has the basic skills prerequisites to enter the desired training curriculum.

Furthermore, written EDPs in many SDAs do not document much information about the applicant's previous work history, vocational interests, skill levels, or barriers to employment. They usually are standardized forms, which state little beyond the services to which the applicant was referred, and, as the occupational goal, restate the occupational area in which training is going to be provided. As currently used in the case study SDAs, EDPs are little more than formal service referral forms.

Most SDAs (or their delegated service providers) do not use EDPs after they are initially prepared, and most SDA counselors never see the clients again after the referral to a specific service provider is made. However, in several SDAs the EDPs become the basis for case management activities by staff members (either SDA staff or service provider staff) assigned to monitor client progress and help address any difficulties that may arise during training. In these SDAs a log of client contacts is used as the mechanism for documenting client progress and noting any amendments to the service plan as they occur.

One of the case study SDAs reexamined its practices in completing individual service plans in recent months. This reassessment of EDPs occurred because the SDA became concerned about the low job retention rate among OJT terminees. As a result, this SDA developed a new EDP form that pays more attention to documenting employment barriers and

service needs. The increased emphasis on retention of placement outcomes, emphasized by the followup performance standards, may convince SDAs to reexamine the adequacy of service planning process that matches clients and services.

SDA Influence on the Quality of Training Through Selection and Monitoring of Service Providers

While SDAs directly operate most of the "front-end" client services, such as intake, assessment, and the development of individual service plans, they frequently use outside contractors to provide occupational and basic skills training to JTPA participants. The number of different contractors used varied widely across SDAs, depending on the level of JTPA funding, the geographic expanse of the SDA, the availability of potential service providers, and the SDA's past experience in using various organizations as service providers.

SDA Influence on the Design and Operation of OJT. The SDAs in the study frequently use multiple contractors to provide occupational classroom training, but usually centralize OJT operations, with a single agency administering the program within any given jurisdiction. (SDA G is the exception to this rule, with two different OJT contractors both operating programs within the same geographic area.)

Eight of the fourteen SDAs that offer on-the-job training as part of their service package operate this service component directly, using SDA staff to negotiate and monitor individual on-the-job training contracts with local employers. In the remaining six SDAs, the organizations selected to operate OJT include one local Chamber of Commerce, several local Job Service district offices, two private for-profit organizations, and one local school district.

SDAs vary in the extent to which they monitor the provision of OJT. In some SDAs, an SDA administrator is responsible for "approving" each individual OJT contract. In others, the SDA has negotiated a performance-based contract with its OJT service provider, and doesn't

pay much attention to the types of training positions that are being used, so long as the service provider meets its contract goals. Both when they closely monitor OJT and when they do not, SDAs do not generally require that the training contracts specify the skills to be obtained by the trainees or the methods for imparting those skills during the training period. This sharply reduces the value of this mode of training as a way to increase the employability of OJT participants, as discussed further in Chapter IV of this report.

SDA Influence on the Design and Operation of Classroom Training. When SDAs arrange for the provision of occupational classroom training, they almost always consider the delivery of training and the placement of the trainee in a job at the conclusion of training a "package deal". The contractors most frequently used to provide occupational classroom training and placement in the case study SDAs include community colleges, vocational technical schools, and private proprietary training institutions. Less frequently used are local school districts and private non-profit agencies. Only one SDA uses community-based organizations heavily as a provider. (In this SDA, CBOs receive 40% of all training funds.)

Some SDAs use line-item cost-reimbursement contracts to purchase occupational classroom training from all service providers; others pay a fixed tuition for individual referral of JTPA clients to training programs available to the public; still others use fixed-unit price contracts with performance requirements to compensate service providers for the placement of JTPA clients at the conclusion of training, or negotiate fixed-unit price contracts with some service providers and cost reimbursement contracts with others. Proprietary schools are frequently given fixed-unit price, performance-based contracts; public educational institutions are often given cost reimbursement contracts, with an understanding that placement in a training-related job is a required part of successful contract completion. However, four of the case study SDAs wrote performance-based contracts for all providers of classroom training. In these SDAs, the "holdback provision" for

placement ranged from 15% to 70% of the total training fee per participant.

Under both cost-reimbursement and fixed-unit price contracts, SDAs usually specify both the number and percentage of participants to be placed into training-related jobs, and a minimum required wage rate for job placements, in order for a provider to get "credit" for a placement. Monitoring of these goals or requirements takes place on a monthly or quarterly basis. However, in most cases the SDA monitors only the contractually required performance objectives (which are also the performance measures on which SDA performance is being rated): i.e., placement rate and wage rate. Little if any attention is paid to the frequency of fringe benefits, or the opportunity offered by the job for career longevity or career advancement.

This focus on the narrowly defined outcomes of training also means that the quality of the training itself is seldom monitored by the SDAs. Most SDA staff had conducted monitoring visits to the administrative staff within the training institution, but many SDA representatives had never visited the classrooms themselves to observe the training being provided. As long as a service provider produces placements, or, if it is not responsible for placement, terminees who can be placed by the SDA, the SDA usually looks no further.

SDA Role in Selecting Occupations for Classroom Training. Most of the SDAs included in the study considered their primary role in influencing the occupational training curricula they funded to be a watchdog role: i.e., to ensure that the training provided was in "demand occupations" in the local economy. In order to carry out this watchdog function, some SDAs periodically reviewed existing information about local employment trends; others consulted with PIC members or conducted selected surveys of local employers to review the unmet needs for trained workers among employers; and others required service providers to justify proposed training programs by providing evidence that a market existed for the graduates of the proposed training. In issuing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to recruit service providers, SDAs

often appended a long list of approved demand occupations from which service providers could select occupations. However, SDA staff and PICs rarely took the initiative of specifying the particular occupations in which they wanted training to be provided.

The fifteen case study SDAs appeared to be fairly successful in ensuring that JTPA training was occurring in occupations in which there was a labor market demand. One exception occurred in an SDA with a very high unemployment rate in which the largest occupational classroom training curriculum was in clerical skills, despite the fact that office jobs were not readily available in the local labor market. In this SDA, there was a tacit understanding that classroom training was often just "marking time" until a job opportunity of any kind opened up in the local economy. A different kind of mismatch between occupational training and labor market opportunities occurred in another SDA in which the most popular classroom training curriculum was a short-term class in electronics assembly. Trainees in this program all hoped to get jobs with a local employer that offered high wages, stable employment, and good fringe benefits. Unfortunately, many of the available job openings in electronics assembly were in less-established companies with lower wages and no fringe benefits, and even the larger employer had substantial instability in its labor demand from one month to the next.

While SDAs do appear to be doing an adequate job of ensuring that training is occurring for occupations in which terminees will be able to locate employment, they do not appear to monitor the quality of the jobs targeted by occupational training programs as closely. Some SDAs require that subsidized on-the-job training positions pay at least $4.00 or $4.50 per hour, but only one of the 15 case study SDAs required that OJT positions meet a number of different indicators of quality employment. In this SDA, all OJT placements are supposed to meet at least four out of five "primary sector" placement criteria, including:

- wage level meeting an average wage set by the PIC for that occupation;

- fringe benefits provided, including paid vacation and holidays or health insurance paid wholly or largely by the employer;

- expected duration of at least three months;

- schedule for regular pay increases and opportunities for advancement through career development and/or training; and

- employer not known to be in violation of any legal safety standards.

We did not observe any similar criteria established at the SDA or service provider level to try to target high quality jobs for graduates of classroom training programs, or to use the quality of the potential jobs as a criteria for selecting which occupational training programs to fund. Thus, the quality of placements was left up to the individual service provider and job developer, so long as the minimum or average wage standard was met.

In addition, several of the SDAs visited were undergoing a transformation from a manufacturing economy to a service economy. The expanding occupational fields in these SDAs were low-level jobs in clerical, janitorial, or warehouse occupations that did not necessarily offer opportunities for advancement, and these were the jobs in which JTPA participants were being placed.

SDA Role in Influencing the Design of Occupational Training Curricula. The SDAs included in the study varied in the extent to which they got involved in the design of occupational training curricula. Three different levels of SDA involvement were observed: (1) SDA purchase of an existing curriculum (the "scholarship" model); (2) SDA involvement in refining an existing training curriculum to better meet the needs of local employers or JTPA participants; and (3) active SDA

initiation of new training programs to take advantage of an unmet demand for trained workers.

In the 10 SDAs where the dominant mode of operating occupational classroom training is individual referral, the JTPA program can be thought of as a scholarship service offering access to mainstream training to individuals who could not otherwise afford it. Although the SDA pays for tuition and offers additional supportive services to classroom training participants under this model, the SDA does not actively influence the design or increase the supply of training to meet the needs of JTPA participants.

A more active role was played by SDAs that worked with their service providers to improve the appropriateness of existing classroom training curricula for JTPA participants. Sometimes this involved expanding an existing curriculum to cover more basic preparation that JTPA participants lacked or to allow more time for practicing learned skills. For example, in one SDA, a truck driver training curriculum was lengthened from 4 weeks to 9 weeks after an SDA-sponsored forum with trucking firms revealed that government licensing requirements had been made more stringent and JTPA participants needed more training. Other times the modification of a curriculum involved shortening an existing curriculum to focus more closely on a single job-relevant skill that would enable participants to find jobs after a briefer period of training. For example, one SDA worked with the local community college to modify its regular one-year medical secretary curriculum to permit completion within two quarters.

Finally, some SDAs have undertaken to work with service providers to identify opportunities for developing new training programs. One SDA had conducted forums with employers in the nursing home industry in order to identify training needs and develop responsive training programs. This forum resulted in the development of a special training program for certified nurses assistants that includes both classroom training and supervised clinical training. Another SDA has developed a

four to six month long culinary arts program for JTPA participants combining classroom training and work experience with local chefs.

Despite isolated examples of active SDA involvement in designing training programs for JTPA participants, the overall trend in the SDAs visited was away from specially-designed class-size training and toward the purchase of existing training. This is a somewhat disturbing finding, in view of the national interest in serving individuals with substantial barriers to employment, given the formal educational prerequisites enforced by most existing programs.

SDA Role in Job Placement. In all of the SDAs visited, responsibility for placement rested first with the service provider, and only secondarily with the SDA, if at all. This responsibility was felt most directly by service providers with placement-linked contract terms, but it was also perceived by providers with cost reimbursement contracts, who knew that their contracts would not be renewed if they did not produce the required number of job placements after training.

Those SDAs that used individual referral to existing classroom training programs were just as likely to expect their service providers to offer placement services as those who offered more class-sized training. In fact, "they don't pay any attention to placement" was often the reason given for not continuing to use a particular service provider. In some SDAs, service provider responsibility for placement differed between public and private providers: public educational institutions were not expected to focus as much attention on placement, and were not given performance based contracts, while proprietary training institutions were required to have performance based contracts with substantial holdbacks for placement. In other SDAs, community colleges and vo-tech schools were expected to place terminees as well as provide training.

In most sites, the SDA was the placement resource of last resort: if a service provider had not placed a terminee by a certain date (e.g., 45 or 60 days after termination), the SDA job development or counseling

staff would step in and attempt to place the person, either through enrolling the terminee in a job search workshop, by arranging an OJT, or by developing a job. With few exceptions, SDAs did not get involved in the placement process as long as service providers were producing the required number of placements.

As discussed above, SDAs required that training be offered in occupations that were in demand in the local economy. However, knowing that an occupation is in demand does not automatically translate into ensuring that the placements available are in quality jobs. By delegating the responsibility for job placement for their service providers, the case study SDAs lost control of this important link in the quality training process. While some service providers were concerned with creating quality employment opportunities for their trainees, others were less interested in, or less qualified to generate good job matches for their graduating trainees. With limited resources to devote to job placement, some training providers appear to have been in too much of a hurry to place graduates in the first training-related job that "came along," rather than taking the time to make a more appropriate match.

SUMMARY OF HOW SDA PRACTICES INFLUENCE THE QUALITY OF JTPA TRAINING

Factors Affecting the Quality of Jobs Obtained by JTPA Participants

Factors Beyond SDA Control

Figure II-11 describes how SDA practices and other factors facilitated or constrained the achievement of quality outcomes for JTPA participants in each of the 15 case study SDAs. It is important to note that factors outside SDA control were an important constraint on achieving quality outcomes in a number of cases. In several central city SDAs, the applicant pool for JTPA included a high percentage of hard-to-serve clients characterized by widespread and severe basic educational deficiencies, making it difficult to provide training that could assist them in obtaining high quality jobs.

Figure II-11

Summary of Factors Facilitating and Constraining the Achievement of Quality Outcomes in the Case Study SDAs

SDA	Factors Supporting Quality Outcomes	Factors Constraining Quality Outcomes
A	• Uses multiple sequencing including basic skills training and occupational CRT; • Direct placement jobs must pay at least $6.00/hr. and offer full health and vacation benefits.	• Performance based contracting may cause some clients to be shoved into jobs too quickly; • Job match procedures not great; • Duration of training relatively short (average 14 weeks)--enough to get entry level jobs.
B	• Requires CRT curricula to be in demand occupations; • Won't train in areas they can't place in; • Can sequence basic skills training with CRT; can piggyback CRT and OJT.	• OJT occupations are low wage jobs with no benefits, no opportunities for advancement. • No real system for coordinating basic skills remediation for adults with occupational training; • Not doing enough to enable residents of rural counties to commute to urban centers.
C	• Tries to get OJT positions that pay at least $5.00 per hour. • SDA involvement in modifying some CRT curricula to be more appropriate for JTPA clients.	• Longest CRT is only 9 months; • Lots of people get only job search skills training and direct placement assistance; • OJT job retention rate is not high.
D	• Up to 10% of OJT slots can be used for job upgrading; • JTPA can be used to pay tuition for any licensed classroom training provider selected by applicant, so long as occupation is approved by SDA.	• Service sequencing not encouraged, except with basic skills remediation; • Very limited supportive services for clients not on welfare.

Figure II-11 (continued)

SDA	Factors Supporting Quality Outcomes	Factors Constraining Quality Outcomes
E	• SDA emphasizes assessment, and case management, so people don't "fall through the cracks". • Basic skills options include both refresher course and intensive GED instruction. • Emphasize CRT over OJT, because they feel it offer better career opportunities and higher wages at placement.	• Few short-term CRT curricula, so hard for trainees to support themselves during training.
F	• Can sequence remediation with occupational CRT; • Can sequence pre-employment training with CRT or OJT.	• SDA caps training costs at $2,200 per client, which limits duration and constrains quality of job placements, and impacts job retention.
G	• Providing training in demand occupations; • Planning for better assessments; • Planning for more sequencing of services.	• Several OJTs in fast food jobs; • Currently limited assessments, little service sequencing; • Hard-to-serve get direct job placements, since OJT is "exclusive".
H	• High proportion of adult terminees receive basic skills remediation.	• Service delays common.
I	• SDA provides basic skills training because they believe that is what will lead to long-term employability. SDA encourages combinations of OJT and CRT, with release time from employer. OJT placements must meet 4/5 primary sector criteria: wage (set for occupation), fringe benefits, opportunities for advancement, etc.	• SDA denies dropouts access to occupational CRT until they get their GED.

Figure II-11 (continued)

SDA	Factors Supporting Quality Outcomes	Factors Constraining Quality Outcomes
J	• Will sometimes piggyback OJT at end of CRT to get a better placement. • Developed combination work and CRT for nurses aide training	• Skimpiest services for the hardest to serve applicants; • OJT job retention probematic.
K		• OJTs tend to be low wage jobs. • Some CRT is in occupations not in demand in local labor market. • CRT participants rarely complete full certificate program.
L	• OJT positions are in high skill jobs in manufacturing sector.	• Least employable clients are given skimpy services: job club. • CRT in hospitality training results in jobs with low pay, bad hours, and little opportunity for advancement.
M	• Minimum wage for OJT contract recently raised from $3.35 to $4.50/hr.; • SDA is trying to find short cheap CRT that will lead to high wages; • 3-day pre-employment curriculum offered to most OJT participants.	• Past emphasis has been on quick cheap training; • Unwilling to offer CRT if applicant has marketable skill for job paying at least $5.00 per hour.
N	• Tries to carefully match OJT applicants to jobs with career potential, high wages and benefits; • JTPA funds instructional assistants at community college to help with course work and basic skills.	• About half of office skills trainees are placed with "temp" agencies, which raises questions about job stability.
O	• Performance based contracts specify minimum entry wages by occupation; • "Combination" curricula permit skills deficient to entry CRT; • $4.00 floor on OJT wage.	• Limited service dollars and performance standards favor short term training; • Prominence of service sector jobs limit job quality; • Not all OJT jobs are jobs with a future.

In the three SDAs with unemployment rates in excess of 10%, the limited opportunities in the job market made it extremely difficult to identify opportunities for quality placements. In addition, the unattractive character of the local labor market (e.g., highly seasonal employment, prominence of low-paying service sector jobs, scarcity of "primary labor market" jobs with opportunities for advancement) appeared to be an important constraint hindering the achievement of quality employment for JTPA terminees in several additional SDAs.

Finally, the limited and/or declining level of JTPA funding in a number of SDAs was forcing them to "ration" limited training dollars and reduce the availability of supportive services to trainees. These exogenous factors were outside SDA control, and made it more difficult for them to run a quality training program with quality outcomes.

SDA Policies and Practices

However, endogenous SDA policies and practices also appeared to influence the likelihood that participants in each case study SDA would find quality jobs for their participants. The following factors were identified, either by SDA practitioners themselves, or by the field researcher who visited each site, as practices that improved the likelihood of positive outcomes in one or more SDAs:

- provision for combinations or sequences of services that address multiple barriers to employment, such as combination basic skills/occupational skills curricula, sequencing of basic skills/occupational skills training, and sequencing or combining CRT and OJT;

- the provision of pre-employment or "job keeping" skills training to individuals with unstable job histories or limited work experience;

- strict SDA monitoring of occupational training areas to make sure that training is in demand occupations;

- SDA requirements or service provider actions targeting higher wage jobs or jobs with fringe benefits for on-the-job placements and/or placement after classroom training; and

- an strong emphasis on case management, so that individuals don't "fall through the cracks" after referral to training.

Indications that there was a problem in the quality of local programs usually included lackluster performance on either the wage standard or the followup employment standard, or anecdotal evidence of mediocre jobs and/or low job retention rates from a particular classroom training curriculum or OJT program. SDA or service provider practices that were observed to be associated with problems in achieving quality employment outcomes in one or more of the 15 case study SDAs included:

- cost limits or time limits to classroom training that prevent the planned curriculum from fully preparing trainees or helping them get better entry jobs;

- limited availability of supportive services for CRT participants which reduced the ability of trainees to complete the full training curriculum;

- lack of opportunity for service sequencing or combinations of services;

- problems with service matching, including referring most needy clients to most superficial services, or not providing CRT appropriate for individuals with basic skills deficiencies;

- use of unattractive jobs as OJT sites: positions with low wages, no benefits, and/or no opportunities for advancement;

- the existence of an incentive for service providers to "shove" trainees into the first available job in order to earn a fixed price per placement.

Summary and Conclusions

As a result of the field observations of SDA and service provider practices and the review of the training match and outcomes experienced by a sample of participants in selected training activities, we have refined the quality of training criteria to be applied at the SDA level. This section reviews these refined criteria and summarizes our findings about the strengths and weaknesses of the case study SDAs in meeting these criteria.

Quality of Client Targeting and Recruitment Practices

In order to meet the quality of training criteria for client targeting and recruitment, an SDA should:

- have a clear set of goals about what client groups it wants to serve;

- conduct outreach and recruitment or oversee service provider outreach and recruitment to ensure that targeted client groups are enrolled, and actively pursue outreach to underserved groups;

- ensure that the available services are appropriate to the needs of the targeted client groups;

- utilize linkages with work-welfare programs to integrate welfare dependent individuals into the JTPA service system, rather than operating segregated "enriched" programs for welfare recipients.

Clear client goals. Nearly three-fourths of the 15 case study SDAs had goals of serving different subgroups within the JTPA-eligible population at a equitable service levels. Only four of the SDAs studied had established formal goals of disproportionately serving groups of high risk adults.

Active outreach. Slightly over one-fourth of the SDAs used active outreach and recruitment practices to carry out well-developed strategies on how to reach the JTPA eligible population. The remaining SDAs relied on passive networking with public and private social service organizations and word-of-mouth to generate applicants to the JTPA system.

Services appropriate to targeted groups. Two of the four SDAs that had targeted hard-to-serve adults had designed service programs appropriate to those groups. In the other two SDAs with formal goals of targeting hard-to-serve adults, the service programs were not well suited to the stated priority groups.

Fully integrated linkages with work-welfare programs. Two-thirds of the case study SDAs had referral and/or funding linkages with work programs for welfare recipients. However, in six of the 10 SDAs with welfare program linkages, these linkages were used to make enriched service packages available to welfare recipients without making similar services available to other JTPA trainees. Furthermore, only one SDA promoted linkages between welfare-funded pre-employment services and JTPA-funded occupational skills training.

Quality of Service Design

In order to meet the quality of training criteria in the area of JTPA service design, an SDA should:

- ensure that the available services are responsive to the service needs of the full range of JTPA-eligible applicants;

- ensure that some form of occupational skills training is accessible to and appropriate for individuals with basic skills deficiencies and other employment barriers, such as unstable work histories;

- reserve the least intensive services--e.g. direct job placement assistance--for those who are most job ready;

- make sure that on-the-job training is intended to benefit both trainees and employers, by arranging for trainees to acquire identifiable job skills;

- provide pre-employment services to individuals who need help in identifying career goals and interests and in learning "job keeping skills";

- create composite services or encourage service sequencing to meet the needs of clients with multiple training needs; and

- provide or arrange for sufficient supportive services so that eligible applicants can participate in training.

Services appropriate for all JTPA applicants. Most of the case study SDAs offered a wide range of services including basic skills training, occupational skills training in a classroom setting, and on-the-job skills training. Nearly three-fourths of the case study SDAs also offered pre-employment training to JTPA applicants or enrollees, and over half of the SDAs offered direct placement assistance as a stand-alone service. In each of the SDAs studied, some services were considered appropriate for applicants who were more job ready and some services were considered appropriate for individuals with more substantial employment barriers.

A review of program features responsive to the needs of adults with basic skills deficiencies revealed that nearly three-fourths of the SDAs

had program designs that were very or somewhat responsive to the needs of hard-to-serve adults, while one-fourth SDAs had program designs that were not responsive to the needs of hard-to-serve adults.

Occupational skills training accessible by hard-to-serve adults. Nearly three-fourths of the study SDAs provided occupational skills training options for individuals who had serious basic skills deficiencies or who lacked a stable work history. The remaining SDAs either encouraged these individuals to participate in basic skills training or directed them to job search skills training or direct placement assistance.

Least intensive services reserved for more most job ready. Job search skills training or direct placement assistance, which is offered by three-fifths of the case study SDAs, was reserved for the most job ready individuals in three SDAs. The remaining SDAs considered direct job placement an appropriate service for less employable individuals.

OJT used to impart identifiable job skills. Detailed findings on the variations in OJT design and implementation are discussed in Chapter IV.

Pre-employment services provided when needed. Nearly three-fourths of the study SDAs provided pre-employment training to some or all JTPA applicants or enrollees. However, few SDAs identified which applicants might benefit from world-of-work training on the basis of assessing their previous work history, or made any special effort to direct pre-employment services to those who might need it in order to successfully retain employment, once a placement was made.

Services appropriate for clients with multiple training needs. In most of the SDAs visited, each of the training components was considered a self-contained program and few opportunities were offered for JTPA participants to receive services from more than one component. Sequential service linkages between basic skills training and occupational skills training were observed in only three instances.

Simultaneous service linkages between basic skills and occupational skills training were available in about half the SDAs studied, through separate basic skills and occupational skills classes (in one-third of the SDAS in the study) and/or through integrated basic skills/occupational skills training programs (in one-fourth of the SDAs).

Sufficient supportive services. One third of the case study SDAs provided little or no financial assistance to JTPA enrollees from JTPA funds for living expenses, transportation expenses, or child care costs. Only one-fourth of the case study SDAs were rated active in providing supportive services. The limited availability of supportive services throughout the JTPA system reduced the attractiveness of classroom training to many applicants who were not on welfare or who could not be supported by another family member while in training.

Quality of Service Provider Selection and Supervision

In order to meet the quality of training criteria, an SDA should:

- oversee or participate in the selection of occupational training areas and the design of training curricula to ensure that the training is relevant to occupations in which there are employment opportunities in the local labor market;

- select service providers and influence training curricula in such a way that JTPA increases the supply of training accessible to and appropriate for JTPA eligible individuals over what would be available without the JTPA investment;

- participate in the job placement function, or provide the service provider with clear goals or incentives to make a careful match and achieve the best possible employment outcome for the trainee at the conclusion fo training.

Ensure training fits labor market. The case study SDAs appeared to be fairly successful in ensuring that JTPA training was occuring in occupations in which there was a labor market demand. Methods used included reviewing local employment statistics, consulting with PIC members, surveying local employers, and requiring service providers to justify the demand for proposed training programs.

Increase the supply of training responsive to JTPA applicants' needs. In two-thirds of the case study SDAs, most occupational classroom training was provided through individual referral to existing training programs. While this promoted increased access to training by JTPA participants, it did not influence the design or increase the supply of training in the local community. In the remaining SDAs, the SDAs were more actively involved in modifying existing training programs to produce class-size programs tailored to meet the needs of JTPA participants, or in initiating new training programs to meet employers' unmet labor demands.

Ensure high quality job placements. The case study SDAs had lost most of their ability to influence this important link in the quality training process because they had delegated the responsibility for job placement to service providers. Although SDAs monitored placement rates and mean wage rates, they usually did not monitor other aspects of placement quality, such as fringe benefits, opportunities for advancement, and whether the job makes full use of the skills learned during training.

Quality of Client Assessment and Service Planning

In order to meet the quality of training criteria for client assessment and development of service plans, an SDA should:

- provide for an objective assessment of individual basic skills levels, to ensure a good match between clients' needs and available services;

- provide an opportunity for applicants to explore occupational interests and aptitudes before deciding on training and placement goals;

- conduct an appropriate assessment of all individuals applying for JTPA services, including both individuals oriented towards classroom training, and individuals interested in direct placement or on-the-job training;

- use the information from assessments to develop a comprehensive service plan that addresses all barriers to employment; and

- use the service plan to monitor client progress towards achievement of training and employment goals.

Objective assessments. Two-fifths of the SDAs in the study used detailed objective tests in assessing applicants' needs, including detailed tests of basic skills, and vocational interest or occupational aptitude tests. Another two-fifths of the SDAs in the study used primarily subjective counseling sessions to determine the appropriate service assignment for JTPA applicants. One-fifth of the SDAs delegated the responsibility for assessment to their service providers.

Opportunity for career exploration. About one-fourth of the case study SDAs used vocational interest tests or vocational exploration techniques to help applicants choose an appropriate occupational goal. The remaining SDAs assumed that JTPA applicants could make a good choice about vocational goals without much assistance, even when they had had little work experience in the selected field.

Assessment of all applicants. Most of the SDAs that offered detailed objective assessments of applicants' skills reserved this full assessment for individuals who were interested in or likely to enter classroom training. The failure to conduct detailed assessments of OJT applicants led to some inappropriate job matches and caused many SDAs to

overlook the need for pre-employment training in individuals who would benefit from world-of-work skills training.

Development of comprehensive service plan. Written service plans in many SDAs were standardized forms that did little beyond restating the services to which the individual was referred. During the counseling session at which the appropriate service referral is determined, the counselor's primary function was to explain the available service options, and determine whether the applicant met the necessary prerequisites to enter the type of training chosen by the applicant. Rarely were applicants referred to more than one service component.

Monitor client progress in completing service plan. Most SDAs did not use EDPs after they were initially prepared, and most SDA counselors never saw the clients again after the referral to a specific service provider was made. In several SDAs, however, an intensive case management function was performed either by the SDA counselor or by a counselor assigned by the provider of training. These counselors monitored client progress on a regular basis and helped address difficulties that arose during training.

Recommendations

One set of recommendations stimulated by the findings described is designed to improve the effectiveness of JTPA services for all clients by strengthening the overall design and implementation of JTPA training. Another set of recommendations is designed to improve the ability of the JTPA system to address the employment barriers experienced by hard-to-serve clients.

Recommendations to Improve the Overall Effectiveness of JTPA Services

1. Increase the use of detailed objective assessments of basic skills during intake into JTPA services.

Appropriate detailed assessments should be performed both for applicants interested in entering occupational classroom training and individuals interested in on-the-job training or direct placement services. These placements should be used not only to assess whether an applicant has the necessary prerequisites for a specific training program, but to identify employability barriers, such as basic skills functional limitations, and to design a comprehensive service package to overcome these barriers.

2. Use vocational interest and vocational aptitude testing as well as active career exploration exercises at JTPA intake for applicants who may benefit from these services.

The objective of increasing the opportunities for vocational exploration is to enable JTPA applicants to make more informed choices about career goals. Increased career exploration should help improve the match between trainee interests and aptitudes and JTPA training for individuals who have limited employment experience as well as for those who want to make a career change but are unsure of what kind of job or training they want.

3. Pay more attention to providing pre-employment services as part of a comprehensive service package, especially for individuals with limited employment experience or unstable work histories.

If more detailed assessments of applicants' work histories and employability barriers were obtained at JTPA intake, SDAs could identify individuals who could benefit from job search skills training and/or world-of-work skills, and could make sure that this training was made available to the applicant as an integrated part of his/her sequence of services.

4. Use JTPA dollars to actively shape the design of local training programs so that they are more responsive to the needs of JTPA participants.

A number of SDAs are spending the majority of their JTPA training funds to purchase training for JTPA clients in existing educational institutions without increasing the supply of training locally, and without shaping the design of the training curricula. If a national policy increasing the emphasis on serving individuals with basic skills limitations is implemented, SDAs will have to use their training resources more strategically, to influence the design and availability of training appropriate for JTPA clients.

5. Pay more attention to the quality of the placements being made at the conclusion of occupational classroom training.

SDAs do not carefully monitor the quality or appropriateness of the jobs into which trainees are placed at the conclusion of occupational classroom training. Service providers reponsible for training and placement are often not experienced at the job development process, and have financial incentives to make a quick placement in the first "training related" job that comes along. The JTPA system would benefit from improved placement practices to ensure that each placement was the best possible job for each training program graduate. A number of different mechanisms could be used, including continued service provider responsibility with increased technical assistance, different staffing of the job development function, different financial incentives, or more careful SDA supervision and monitoring. Alternatively, SDA staff could play an increased role in the job development and job placement process.

6. Promote the use of case management techniques by designated SDA staff or service provider staff, particularly when a JTPA participant is participating in a long training program, or is receiving a package of several services to address multiple employment barriers.

While formal case management is not a necessary mechanism for every SDA or every training program, it appeared to be particularly advantageous in the case study SDAs that used it to keep track of individuals who were enrolled in long-term training at community colleges or to keep track of the progress of OJT participants. The purpose of periodic (bi-weekly or monthly) contacts between a JTPA counselor and the client was to address problems that might interfere with successful program completion as they arose, and to keep track of the progress of the trainee in mastering the training curriculum. Case management would also be important if a client was receiving services from more than one provider either sequentially or concurrently, to ensure that the combined services were being coordinated.

Recommendations to Improve the Effectiveness of JTPA Training for Hard-to-Serve Clients

1. Clarify national program priorities regarding the emphasis to be placed on serving hard-to-serve individuals through the JTPA program.

Only a minority of SDAs are currently giving hard-to-serve adult groups priority in JTPA client targeting. Not all SDAs have designed programs to respond to the employment barriers experienced by adult dropouts, individuals with functional limitations in basic skills, and individuals with unstable work histories. If the federal government wants an increased emphasis on serving the least job ready among the JTPA-eligible population, it needs to be explicit about establishing these goals at the federal level.

2. Provide national leadership in promoting the design of service packages that are responsive to the needs of these groups.

In terms of program design elements, service designs response to the needs of adults with basic skills limitations or other substantial employment barriers should include:

- opportunities for individuals both to upgrade their basic skills and to obtain occupational skills through integrated service sequences and combined basic skills/occupational skills training programs;

- careful attention to providing the world-of-work skills that may mean the difference between keeping a job and losing it, after the placement has been made; and

- a strategy for how hard-to-serve adults can support themselves during a comprehensive package of basic skills training and occupational skills training services.

An effort should be made at the federal, state, and SDA levels to encourage the development and dissemination of service models that enable individuals with substantial employment barriers to achieve high quality placements and improved long-term employability. Possible mechanisms include technical assistance efforts, special demonstration funding, financial incentives, SDA-to-SDA consultations, and service provider training workshops.

3. Promote integrated linkages between JTPA training and work programs for welfare recipients.

Current work-welfare linkages are enabling SDAs to provide an enriched package of pre-employment services to welfare recipients, but are failing to integrate welfare program clients into the JTPA occupational training system. Current practices have resulted in the design of two separate vocational service systems in many locations. The implementation of the federal JOBS program should provide an opportunity for pursuing a closer integration of the JTPA service system and the vocational services provided to JOBS participants.

III. QUALITY OF CLASSROOM TRAINING PROGRAMS

This chapter is divided into two major sections corresponding to the two types of classroom training programs reviewed -- occupational training programs and basic skills training programs. While many of the classroom training programs include some basic skills instruction, their primary goal is to prepare students for jobs. Basic skills programs, on the other hand, are designed to increase reading, writing, and math skills and/or result in obtaining an education credential, usually the General Educational Development certificate (G.E.D.).

OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS

Introduction

In assessing the quality of classroom occupational training supported by JTPA, we used the criteria of quality training described in Chapter I. These criteria fall into three general areas: the appropriateness of the training for JTPA clients, process indicators of the quality of the training provided, and measures of outcomes, from both the participant and employer perspectives. The instructional variables we considered indicative of quality were based upon past research on training effectiveness. These included:

- relevance of the training content for the jobs JTPA participants would find;
- clarity of training objectives;
- coordination of basic skills remediation and occupational training;
- use of instructional techniques that promote active learning;
- ability of the instructor to diagnose student learning problems and adapt instruction appropriately;
- training for transfer;
- effective use of class time; and
- systematic assessment of learning outcomes.

Classroom Program Sample

The SDA site visits included observations and interviews at 22 classroom occupational training programs. At each SDA, there was an effort to choose one or more of the programs used most extensively, while still maintaining a good distribution of occupational areas across SDAs. Figure III-1 shows the distribution of occupational areas for the 22 observed programs. As illustrated by the table, there was a wide range of occupations in our classroom training sample, but computer clerical/data entry/bookkeeping programs were sampled rather heavily (six programs). This was a function of their prevalence within JTPA-sponsored classroom training. Other than the six programs in this occupational cluster, the only duplication of occupations within our sample was electronics assembly (2), building/carpentry (2), and nursing-related (2) fields.

Of the six sampled computer clerical classroom training programs, five emphasized basic secretarial skills and office procedures, including word processing, 10-key, basic bookkeeping, and receptionist skills. Two of these programs also included a data entry component and two programs provided additional training for participants interested in specializing in either medical or legal secretarial work. The sixth sampled computer clerical program was a computerized bookkeeping course that prepared participants for bookkeeping and account clerk positions.

The two electronics assembly training programs varied significantly in design and type of skills imparted during training. One electronics assembly program was 14 weeks in duration and trained participants to become adept at electrical harnessing and electronics assembly, while the other was a three-week program designed exclusively to prepare participants for a proficiency exam required for entry-level employment by two local defense contract firms.

The two building/carpentry classroom training programs sampled were also significantly different. The one-year program covered materials, drawing, drafting, blueprint reading, estimating and building

Figure III-1

Distribution of

Occupational Areas Represented in the

Classroom Occupational Training Sample

Occupational Area	Frequency	(%)
Computer clerical/data entry/ bookkeeping	6	(27)
Electronics assembly	2	(9)
Building/carpentry	2	(9)
Nursing related	2	(9)
Claims processing	1	(5)
Truck driving	1	(5)
Retail sales	1	(5)
Hospitality	1	(5)
Accounting	1	(5)
Auto Maintenance	1	(5)
Computer service	1	(5)
Welding	1	(5)
Service to disabled	1	(5)
Precision machinist	1	(5)
Total	22	(104)

techniques, which prepared participants for a broad array of building-related positions or for entry into a formal apprenticeship program. Eighteen weeks in duration, the second building program provided training on the fundamental principles of building techniques used in a variety of entry-level building trade jobs.

Nursing-related training offered in two of our sampled classroom training programs included a rigorous one-year Licensed Practical Nurse program offered by a county hospital and a 10-week Nurses Aide program coupled with basic remediation skills training. Participants in both programs had no trouble securing positions upon program completion (because of the high demand for nursing staff), and once employed were likely to be able to access additional employer-sponsored nursing training.

The sole customized classroom training program included in our sample was a seven-week Medicaid claims processing course targeted predominantly to welfare recipients. Initially skeptical of the provider's ability to train welfare mothers successfully, the employer has since enthusiastically embraced the program after the first cycle of well-trained participants emerged.

Two sampled classroom training programs were targeted exclusively to hard-to-serve groups. The retail sales training is designed to prepare youth drop-outs for entry-level retail positions; skills imparted include operating a cash register, making change, and customer relations. The service-to-disabled training was designed for welfare recipients. They are taught how to work with youth with multiple disabilities; program topics include normalization, pharmacology, behavior modification, and basic life skills. Both programs are of relatively short duration, at 8 and 12 weeks, respectively.

Hospitality training, another sampled program, was dually designed to orient participants to potential career opportunities in the hospitality industry and to increase participants' job seeking skills, motivation, and work attitudes. Expected employment included placements

in housekeeping, front desk clerk, and food and beverage positions in the local resort community. Hospitality training was conducted for three hours a day, five days a week, for six weeks.

Other sampled classroom training programs included a 9-week truck driving program for participants interested in obtaining a Class A license, a four-semester accounting program to prepare participants for entry-level accountant and junior accountant positions, a 24-week auto mechanic program for those desiring to become auto technician assistants, and a 24-week fairly intensive computer repair training program. Additionally, we sampled a one-year welding program and a 14-week precision machinist training program.

The focus of the sampled classroom training programs varied from training for very narrow occupations to training in broad occupational fields. For example, programs such as the Licensed Practical Nurse, computer service, and truck driving were narrowly focused; program completers were expected to obtain employment in a specific occupation. Programs with wider occupational focus included hospitality training that prepared participants for employment as housekeeping, front desk clerk, or food and beverage workers, and the accounting training program that prepared participants for a variety of accounting related positions. Skills developed in the clerical and building/carpentry training programs are considered broad because program completers are able to obtain employment in a wide array of occupationally related fields. Half (50%) of the sampled classroom training programs were narrow, 23% were mid-range, and 27% were broad in focus.

Diversity was apparent in the types of institutions providing JTPA-supported classroom occupational training. Roughly one-third of the programs were offered by proprietary schools, 27% were run by community colleges, and 18% were offered by public adult technical education centers. Other providers were a school district, a private nonprofit training center, a hospital, and a residential institution for handicapped children.

The selected JTPA classroom training programs varied widely in terms of duration and cost to the JTPA program. The programs ranged from 3 weeks to 2 years in length and from $100 to $5,000 in cost per trainee. The mean program duration was 623 training hours. The mean cost to JTPA was $2,045 per client. Figures III-2 and III-3 provide distributions for program duration and cost, respectively.

There were some differences by provider type in terms of program duration and cost.[1] On average, programs at proprietary schools lasted 15 weeks with 35 hours of instruction a week for a total of 527 hours. In community college programs, the average was 17 weeks with 27 hours a week for a total of 452 hours. The four technical education center programs in our sample were considerably longer in duration (46 weeks, with an average of 22 hours per week for a mean total of 1,030 hours). Per client costs paid by JTPA showed considerable differences between proprietary schools and other providers. The mean cost was $1,346 for community colleges, $1,706 for technical education centers, and $3,137 for proprietary schools. Thus, mean cost to JTPA per hour of instruction was $2.98 for community college programs, $1.66 at technical education centers, and $5.95 at proprietary schools.

A majority of the classroom training providers (55%) had a contract with some kind of hold-back for job placement after program completion. All of the proprietary school providers were on performance-based contracts compared to 29% of the nonproprietary providers.

Most of the classroom training programs studied were individual referrals (70%) rather than class-size programs. However, almost a quarter of the programs with individual referral were classes that contained a very high proportion of JTPA participants (i.e., at least 40% of the students).

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[1] Throughout this chapter, we make some observations concerning provider type differences within our sample of 22 classroom occupational training programs. These should be viewed with considerable caution because our sample contained just 8 proprietary school, 6 community college, and 4 technical education center programs.

Figure III-2
Distribution of
Training Duration for the
Classroom Occupational Training Sample

Duration (hours)	Frequency	(%)
60 - 199	2	(9)
200 - 399	7	(32)
400 - 599	3	(14)
600 - 799	4	(18)
800 - 999	3	(14)
over 1000	3	(14)
Total[a]	22	(101)

[a] Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

Figure III-3

Distribution of Mean Program Cost per Client in the Classroom Occupational Training Sample

Cost	Frequency	(%)
$ 0 - 499	1	(5)
500 - 999	3	(14)
1000 - 1499	6	(27)
1500 - 1999	2	(9)
2000 - 2499	4	(18)
2500 - 2999	2	(9)
3000 - 3499	1	(5)
3500 - 3999	1	(5)
4000 - 4499	0	(0)
5000 - 5499	2	(9)
Total[a]	22	(101)

[a] Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

Appropriateness of Training for JTPA Client Population

Enrollment Criteria

Our review of classroom training programs included an examination of the participation criteria set by the provider and/or the SDA. The most common enrollment requirement was a reading grade level, which was used by 59% of the programs. The level set for participation in most programs is not very high, usually a sixth or seventh grade reading level. A significant number of programs (32%) require a seventh grade reading level or above.

Although we do not know the distribution of reading grade levels for the JTPA-eligible population, we can make some inferences about the proportion of the eligible population that is barred from entering these programs based upon national data. An estimated 32% of those born between 1957 and 1962 had reading ability below the seventh grade level, based upon a large-scale testing conducted in 1980 (Department of Defense, Profile of American Youth, 1982). The proportion of readers below the seventh grade level among the groups targeted by JTPA (i.e., minority group members, dropouts, and welfare recipients) is even higher (Bock & Moore, 1986). Thus, a significant proportion of the JTPA-eligible population would find their options for classroom occupational training limited.

A minimum grade level equivalent in mathematics was required for 41% of the programs. Again, the average grade level requirement was not high, but 18% of the programs required a math grade level of seventh grade or above. Figure III-4 shows the distribution of grade level equivalent requirements in both reading and mathematics.

There were only slight differences between community college and proprietary school programs in the stringency of their reading and math requirements. Six of the eight proprietary school programs had a minimum requirement and the average among these was a 7.0 reading grade level and a 7.3 math level. Four of the six community college programs

Figure III-4

Distribution of Reading and Mathematics Grade Level Equivalent Requirements for Classroom Occupational Training Programs

(Percentage of programs appears in parentheses)

Grade Level Equivalent Required	Reading		Mathematics	
4th	2	(9)	2	(9)
5th	1	(5)	1	(5)
6th	3	(14)	2	(9)
7th	3	(14)	1	(5)
8th	2	(9)	1	(5)
9th	1	(5)	1	(5)
10th	1	(5)	1	(5)
No grade level requirement	9	(40)	13	(59)
Required GED	4		6	
No required GED	5		7	
Total[a]	22	(101)	22	(102)

[a] Percentages do not total 100 due to rounding.

specified minimum basic skill requirements with a mean reading grade level of 6.7 and a math grade level of 6.0.[2]

The second most common type of requirement for admission to classroom occupational training is possession of a high school diploma or a G.E.D. This was a requirement for eight of the classroom training programs (36%). Since high school drop out rates are in the neighborhood of 30% in many urban communities and, again, are higher for minorities and individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds, this requirement too limits the classroom training options for many JTPA participants.

Several of the training providers noted that the training itself did not require the diploma, but that the job market in the occupation demanded it. In our opinion, SDAs need to consider this problem carefully, preferably obtaining hard data before making a decision. Two of the urban SDAs in our sample are in very similar labor markets, and yet one requires a high school diploma or equivalency for most of its classroom training programs while the other does not. There are costs associated both with limiting training to those with a high school education and with failure to require a high school equivalency. One of the programs reviewed does not require a high school diploma, but local employers in the target industry do so, making high-quality placements from the classroom training exceedingly difficult. Four of the eight proprietary school programs require a high school diploma or G.E.D. compared to one of six community college programs.

Less frequently used entrance requirements were writing samples (2 programs), tests of reasoning (2), typing speed (2), math courses (2), and basic English (1). Designating programs as selective if they require

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[2]We sampled training activities that served larger numbers of JTPA enrollees, rather than curricula in which only one or two JTPA participants were enrolled. Thus, the community college programs in our activity sample may have been more responsive to the needs of individuals with limited formal educational skills, and less restrictive in their prerequisites than the universe of community college curricula to which SDAs refer individual JTPA clients.

a high school diploma or G.E.D. and/or reading and math skills at the eighth grade level, we found that 8 of the 22 (36%) sample occupational classroom training programs were selective.

It should be noted that 20% of the sampled individual-referral programs provided additional classroom support in basic skills to JTPA participants. One SDA that sponsored a fairly rigorous computer service technician training course paid for individualized tutoring to assist participants with difficult coursework. This same SDA also sponsored tutors for participants in an individually referred business clerical course. These tutors were assigned to specific participants and available approximately five hours per day in the business lab for tutoring so that JTPA participants encountering difficulty with coursework received intensive individualized tutoring which would otherwise not have been available. JTPA participants pursuing classroom occupational skills training in another SDA received basic skills training through a program established at the community college exclusively for JTPA referred participants.

The issue of entrance requirements naturally leads to questions about the alternatives available for those who do not meet them. Figure III-5 shows the distribution of alternatives provided for applicants who do not meet classroom training enrollment criteria. Thirteen programs will accept marginal applicants and provide either tutoring (seven) or concurrent basic skills course (six). This remediation is sometimes required and sometimes merely "available." Seven other programs refer unqualified applicants to adult education programs. Five programs merely turn students away.

Match to Client Needs

There are many dimensions to the client-training match issue. This includes not only the match to the client's level of prior skill development, but also the match to client occupational interests, and the extent to which both the training itself and the occupation prepared

Figure III-5

Distribution of Alternatives for Applicants Who Do Not Meet Entrance Requirements for Sampled Classroom Occupational Training Programs

Alternatives	Frequency[a]
Waive requirement	3
Tutoring or workbook on basic skills	7
Referral to basic education services required prior to entry	7
Referral to basic education services taken concurrently with occupational training	6
Reject[b]	5

a One program does not have any entrance requirements. Seven programs offer multiple alternatives to applicants who do not meet entrace requirements based on applicant's skill level.

b The five programs that reject applicants who do not meet entrance requirements do not offer any other alternatives to applicants.

for are compatible with the employment barriers and constraints facing the particular JTPA participant.

Most of the programs do a good job in matching clients to programs they're interested in. Some 60% of the records suggested a good match to client interests. Fewer than 5% of the current participant records we reviewed contained evidence of a poor match to client interests. An example of a poor match is a man with a tested reading level of the fourth grade who was assigned to an auto mechanics program requiring seventh-grade reading.

In addition to assignments that violate program prerequisite requirements, skill level mismatches occur in cases where successful completion of the training requires a higher level of reading or math skill than is required for acceptance into the classroom training program. This appeared to be a significant problem for four of the programs reviewed. In some of these programs, we suspected that the skills required to complete the training are not only higher than those required for admission but also more advanced than those required by the jobs available. The director of one very rigorous computer/clerical training program informed us that her graduates would have to move out of the area to find jobs requiring the skills she was training. If the training is more difficult and demanding of academic skills than the job, it becomes another hurdle for the JTPA participant.

Additional indicators of poor matches were found in some programs where a large proportion of enrollees do not complete the program. In one of the programs we studied (a two-year community college-based program in business skills) the completion rate is less than 10 percent. In some cases (such as the LPN program we studied) the high attrition rate seems to be a function of the rigor of the training, but more often, it is simply that the training program is quite long and the pay-off small or unsure enough that students take any job that comes up prior to completing training. Twenty percent of the providers have a policy of encouraging students to leave training early if employment is found. In some instances there seems to be no expectation that the

client enrolled in a lengthy program will actually complete it. Some SDAs quite consciously use classroom training as a "holding area" for clients for whom an appropriate job opening is not apparent at the time of enrollment.

Finally, there were several programs providing training for occupations that had working conditions unacceptable to many JTPA participants. We found examples of individuals enrolled in training programs without adequate knowledge of the fact that the jobs they were training for entail long periods of time away from home, night shift work (in a program designed for AFDC mothers), and seasonal employment.

Quality of Training

Curriculum

For each classroom training program, descriptions of the program curriculum were sought. These were supplemented with interviews with instructors and program directors to obtain a more complete picture of the curriculum content.

According to the instructors interviewed in the selected classroom training programs, few of the SDAs participated in or influenced curriculum development. A majority of programs (64%) said that they had sought and utilized input from employers in designing their course of instruction. The formality of the employer input process ranged from quarterly meetings with an established set of employers to informal needs assessment between instructors and employers based on intermittent contact. One program we visited had not revised its curriculum since 1980, and another program's manual described tools and components no longer commonly used in production.

Accredited programs, such as that for the LPN certificate, are required to use curricula established by national licensing boards. Similarly, community colleges are required to have program curricula approved by a curriculum approval board. While this process is critical

during the design phase, one program instructor indicated that updating curricula can be a cumbersome process in the community college setting.

Clarity of objectives. The first step in a systematic training program is specification of objectives -- statements of what is to be learned. These objectives serve several purposes: (1) they help the person developing instruction see what is to be learned, and can be analyzed to ascertain the type of learning required, and therefore appropriate instructional strategies and methods of testing, and (2) they communicate to students what is to be learned and the expectations for passing the training course. Although several different approaches to writing instructional objectives are used within the training community (Gagne & Briggs, 1979; Merrill, 1983; Greeno, 1976), there is widespread agreement that objectives should be written in terms of what the student will learn or accomplish ("student-centered") rather than in terms of what the instructor will present ("instructor-centered"). Common approaches to systematic, competency-based instruction prescribe instructional objectives with three components: a statement of the action to be performed, specification of the conditions under which the action is performed, and a statement of the standards for performance.

All of the classroom training program had some kind of statement of content, but they did not have the specificity prescribed by systems of instructional design. The statement provided by the LPN program (shown in Figure III-6), was fairly typical. The student is given a list of topics, which are neither student-centered, skill oriented, nor specific. To put this example in perspective, however, it should be noted that the same criticisms could be levelled at most college and community college courses. Figure III-7 shows a section of one of the best curriculum descriptions we encountered. This description of a retail sales program is much longer and more comprehensive, and includes not just topics but competency statements.

More serious than the programs' failure to meet the formal requirements for formulating instructional objectives is the fact that curriculum descriptions given to students were sometimes too sketchy to

Figure III-6

LPN Curriculum

The curriculum combines nursing theory and clinical practice throughout the entire program. It provides the student with opportunities to learn how to meet both physical and psychosocial needs of mothers and infants, children, medical-surgical patients, the aged, and patients with long-term illnesses.

LEVEL I & LEVEL II - 26 weeks (includes two-weeks' vacation)

Orientation & Study Habits
Anatomy & Physiology
Fundamentals of Nursing & Clinical Experience
Gerontology
Human Growth & Development
Medical-Surgical Nursing I
Nutrition
Personal & Professional Relationships
Pharmacology

LEVEL III - 22 weeks (includes two-weeks' vacation)

Medical-Surgical Nursing II
Nursing & the Childbearing Family
Nursing Care of Children
Psychiatric Nursing

LEVEL IV - 4 weeks

Long Term Care Nursing

Figure III-7

Retail Sales Curriculum Excerpt

Unit I. CASHIER SKILLS

A. Operating a Cash Register
- -- Using dollar and cent keys
- -- Using sub-total and total keys
- -- Using additional keys (e.g., to identify product: meat, produce, hardware department, toy department, etc.)
- -- "Ringing up" two or more identical items
- -- Opening and closing cash drawer
- -- Locking and unlocking cash register
- -- Loading cash register tape

B. Handling Money
- -- Counting money
- -- "Facing" money in a cash drawer
- -- Giving change to customers
- -- Identifying foreign currency
- -- Identifying counterfeit money
- -- Recognizing and preventing customer deception ("flim-flamming") at the cash register

C. Processing Credit Card Sales
- -- Identifying major credit cards and store credit cards
- -- Filling out credit card sales receipts (by hand and with credit card printer)
- -- Checking signatures
- -- Checking available balance in credit card accounts
- -- Giving copy of credit card receipt to customer; retaining copies for store and credit company

D. Accepting Personal Checks
- -- Assuring that amount of sale is properly recorded on check
- -- Assuring that required information is written on face of check
- -- Requesting required identification (e.g., driver's license, credit card)

E. Addtional Cashier Skills
- -- Processing manufacturer's and store's coupons (checking for validity, subtracting value from total bill)
- -- Using computerized "price scanner" systems
- -- Checking for switched, altered, or missing price tags

Competencies: The participant is able to:
- Accurately and efficiently operate a standard electric cash register
- Count money and give change accurately
- Identify foreign currency and counterfeit money
- Process credit card transactions
- Process personal check transactions
- Accept and review manufacturer and store coupons
- Identify switched or altered price tags

convey even the major course topics clearly. We encountered some specific instances of past classroom training participants who claimed that the training curriculum did not deliver what was promised. One experienced machinist took a 420-hour machinist course because he wanted to learn how to use computer numerical control (CNC) systems, only to find at the end that the course did not include this content. Clear and complete documentation of curriculum objectives, transmitted to students at the beginning of the course (and to the SDA prior to placement), can curtail such misunderstandings.

Occupational relevance. JTPA supports classroom training geared toward helping individuals obtain good jobs to which they might not otherwise have access. Thus, the training should be relevant to getting, maintaining, and advancing in a job. For the most part (73%), the occupational relevance of the studied classroom programs was high. In cases where content job relevance appeared marginal (e.g., the history of nursing), it was usually relevant to completing a prescribed program for a credential or to passing written tests used by employers or licensing bodies.

There were some specific cases of nonrelevant content, however. The most problematic example was a program for the hospitality industry whose graduates were placed largely in housekeeping positions. The class provides job-related information but does not try to teach occupational skills. In the observed class, guest lecturers talked on topics such as the history and tourist sites of the county. More typically, classroom programs include just one or two topics with dubious job relevance.

Content analysis. To describe the nature of what is taught in JTPA classroom training programs, we developed a taxonomy of content categories.

- Basic Skills include "remedial" instruction in reading, arithmetic, English usage and writing. Essentially, these

are generalizable academic skills that students are expected to have by the eighth grade.

- Occupational Skills are procedures that one is likely to use on the job. They may be more or less job-specific, but will always be something that a person does rather than just knows.

- Occupation-Related Knowledge involves information or concepts related to the jobs for which students are being trained. It is distinguished from occupational skills in that this is something a person knows or can talk about rather than something a person does.

- World of Work concerns informing students of types of jobs available in the occupation category and of the expectations placed upon employees in those jobs. This includes topics such as a discussion of the need for punctuality, proper dress, and how to get along with a supervisor.

- Job Search Skills and Assistance concern the process of getting a job. This includes reviewing job advertisements, practice in writing resumes, practice in taking interviews, etc.

- Motivation or Life Skills involve practical exercises designed to change the personal characteristics and coping skills of the trainees. These include exercises designed to make trainees feel more responsible for what happens to them (sometimes called "internal control" or "attribution patterns"), to enhance their self concept, or to be more assertive. Included also are general life skills such as communicating and dealing with stress.

Using this taxonomy, we classified program content and used information on the number of hours spent on each course topic to estimate the proportion of time devoted to each type of content.

One would certainly expect occupational skills to be taught in an occupational classroom training program, and this was almost uniformly true of the 22 programs studied. All but the hospitality program described above included instruction in occupational skills. Similarly, all but one of the programs included an occupation-related knowledge component. What is more interesting is the relative balance between occupational skills and occupation-related knowledge content. This was an issue of concern in our evaluation because too many classroom training programs put more emphasis on "theory" or academic knowledge than on skill training, with the result that benefits for on-the-job performance tend to be disappointing. Too often students memorize a vocabulary and answers to test questions without being able to do anything with the information acquired.

Most of the JTPA-supported classroom training programs reviewed appeared to have avoided at least the more blatant forms of this shortcoming. For 16 of the 22 programs (73%), more emphasis was placed on learning occupational skills than on occupation-related knowledge. The average proportion of the program content classified as occupational skills was 55% while that for occupational knowledge was 34%. Within the sample of 22 programs, however, there was a significant minority of programs (six, or 27%) placing more emphasis on imparting occupational knowledge than on occupational skills. One of these programs, covering "wood technics," can serve as an example. This four-quarter program is offered by a state technical (two-year) college. A high school diploma or equivalency is required for admission. The program includes courses in applied mathematics, and fundamentals of materials, drawing, drafting, blueprint reading, building techniques, and welding. Each class meets for one hour three times a week and students have about 10 hours of lab per week (covering material from several classes). The observed class was part of the "Fasteners" course and covered topics such as historical uses of, reasons for popularity, and qualities of

different types of wood. It included a discussion of different ways to choose wood, but no practice in doing so; students get practice in labs, but the separation of the knowledge and skill components of the course brings the risk of poor coordination. Evaluation is done on the basis of written tests that consist primarily of sentence completion and true/false items (both of which tap knowledge rather than skill).

This program, which emphasizes occupational knowledge rather than skill and follows a typical academic schedule, can be contrasted to the other building/carpentry classroom training program in our sample. This one-semester course is offered by a proprietary occupational skills training center. Admission generally requires a ninth-grade reading and math level but there is no requirement for a high school diploma. Students in the course say that they want to acquire a trade but could not afford to take the three-year apprenticeship offered by the local community college. The program consists of three hours each morning in the classroom and four hours each afternoon working on projects in a workshop or at a building site. Recent classes have built a locker room addition for the local YMCA and converted a carriage house into a day care center. Every class builds a gazebo to be raffled off to raise funds for training scholarships. Students praise the course for helping them learn to "figure things out" for themselves and learn to ask good questions at a work site. The evaluation of students includes an assessment of work done in the shop and attitude and cooperation shown there as well as scores on written examinations. Thus, this course is shorter, more intensive, and more practically oriented than the first carpentry course.

There appeared to be some provider type differences on this variable. None of the proprietary school programs gave more emphasis to occupational knowledge than to skills while half of the community college programs did so.

In the 22 programs we studied, the other types of training content were less uniformly covered than were occupational skills and knowledge. Some training in basic skills was included in 13 (59%) of the programs.

(The ways in which this basic skills content was integrated with the rest of the training is discussed in the next section.) However, in the majority of cases, basic skills were not a large part of the classroom occupational training program; the average proportion of class time spent on basic skills for those programs that included basic skills content was 14%.

World of work instruction was included in 13 programs (59%). For those programs including a world of work component, this content averaged 5% of the course content. Eleven programs (50%) included a job search skills component, which also comprised 5% of the curriculum on average. Motivation or life skills training was included in seven of the classroom training programs; on average, this was just 3% of the program content.

These curriculum content analysis data are summarized in Figure III-8. Creating a composite picture of the "average" JTPA classroom occupational training program, we would have about 53% occupational skills, 33% occupation-related knowledge, 7% basic skills instruction, 3% world of work instruction, 3% job skills instruction, and 1% motivation training. (No actual program included all of these components.)

Incorporation of basic skills. For many within the JTPA-eligible population, basic skills deficiencies pose a major barrier to obtaining and keeping a job. Most employers are willing to train entry-level workers in job-specific skills but seek to avoid undertaking the time-consuming process of training in the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic. As the JTPA program evolves to place increasing emphasis on serving those with basic skills deficiencies, the way in which SDAs and providers deal with basic skills will become an increasingly prominent issue.

There are two general approaches to basic skills remediation: general and occupational-context (sometimes called functional context training). The general approach uses standard academic materials and

Figure III-8

Distribution of Curriculum Content in Classroom Occupational Training Programs

% of Content	Basic Skills	(%)	Occupational Skills		Occupational Knowledge		World of Work		Job Search		Motivation	
0	9	(41)	1	(5)	1	(5)	9	(41)	11	(50)	15	(68)
1 - 10	8	(36)	--		2	(9)	12	(54)	9	(41)	7	(32)
11 - 20	3	(14)	1	(5)	4	(18)	1	(5)	2	(9)	--	
21 - 30	1	(5)	2	(9)	4	(18)	--		--		--	
31 - 40	--		3	(14)	6	(27)	--		--		--	
41 - 50	1	(5)	6	(27)	2	(9)	--		--		--	
51 - 60	--		3	(14)	--		--		--		--	
61 - 70	--		1	(5)	2	(9)	--		--		--	
71 - 80	--		2	(9)	1	(5)	--		--		--	
81 - 90	--		3	(14)	--		--		--		--	
91 - 100	--		--		--		--		--		--	
Total[a]	22	(101)	22	(102)	22	(100)	22	(100)	22	(100)	22	(100)

[a] Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

exercises. Programs using this approach generally follow the assumption that since basic skills are a foundation for later learning, they should be acquired prior to attempting to learn more specialized occupational content. Advocates of the occupational context approach argue that this assumption is both unnecessary and deleterious to individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds (Sticht et al., 1987). The academic settings and methods used to teach general basic skills are often precisely those that have been associated with failure in the past. Participants are likely to feel inept and to drop out prior to ever receiving occupational training. The alternative, occupation-related basic skills training, teaches basic skills in an occupation-related context. This calls for integrating the basic skills and occupational content into the same classes. Sticht (1975) compared this approach for teaching reading comprehension to more traditional, general literacy training and found that it was three times as effective for improving performance on job-related literacy tasks.

As indicated above, basic skills content was included in 13 of the classroom occupational training programs reviewed. Figure III-9 shows how basic skills training is included (many programs deal with basic skills deficiencies in several different ways). Nine programs (41%) teach basic skills content within the same class with occupational content. As discussed above, we regard this as a positive practice for a program aimed at JTPA participants. However, even when basic skills content is included in the same class as occupational content, it is not always well integrated. In one bookkeeping class, for example, the basic skills training is provided through workbooks that do not use occupational examples. In this case, there is no attempt to create linkages between the basic skills and occupation-related applications of them.

Six programs include separate basic skills classes as part of the required program; in addition, three programs are in institutions that make basic skills classes available (although they are not required). Where separate basic skills classes are required or available, they are usually taken concurrently with the first part of the training program.

Figure III-9

Distribution of Basic Skill Services for Classroom Occupational Training Sample

Basic Skills Services	Frequency[a]	(%)
Required Basic Skills		
Math within occupational training class	9	(33)
Reading comprehension within occupational training class	3	(11)
Required math basic skills course	6	(22)
Required English/reading basic skills course	1	(4)
Available Basic Skills		
Optional math basic skills course	3	(11)
Optional English/reading basic skills course	3	(11)
Basic skills workbooks or tutoring available	2	(7)

[a] Some programs included multiple basic skills components.

In just a few programs, basic skills courses are required prior to starting occupational training.

Of the nine programs incorporating basic skills skills content in the occupational training classes, all incorporate math content and only three literacy content (i.e., English, reading comprehension, or writing). One of these integrates reading instruction with occupational training and two include a review of English grammar. Required separate literacy-related classes are rare as well: one program includes required English and reading taught in a course separate from the occupational training. As the JTPA program becomes more oriented toward those with skill deficits, much more should be done to integrate significant amounts of basic skills training, especially literacy training, into the occupationally oriented programs.

The two occupational classroom training programs in our sample that include substantial required basic skills training (35% and 40% of their programs) are both in the same SDA. This SDA targets hard-to-serve clients and stresses classroom training and basic skills. The two programs illustrate the alternative approaches to basic skills training described above. One provider offers general basic skills instruction in separate classes to students grouped by reading and math ability rather than their occupational course of study. The materials used are general (G.E.D. program). Although the basic skills instructors try to incorporate some occupation-relevant examples, this is difficult because students in the basic skills classes come from at least four different occupational programs and the basic skills instructor does not know what is being taught in those courses.

The other provider illustrates the occupational context approach. Basic skills training (math only) is integrated with blueprint and shop skills. The class spends about 30% of its time on learning math skills. The particular math skills taught at any point in the course are those needed to support learning the occupational skills being developed at that time. In this way, the basic skills and occupational skills training complement and reinforce each other.

Sequencing

Good instruction has a logical sequence. The curriculum has been carefully thought out and sequenced so that new learning builds upon old. One sequencing principle that is intuitively obvious and hence widely followed is to move from the simple to the complex. There are also more subtle sequencing principles, however. Instructional psychologists recommend a "spiral curriculum" in which a skill or concept is taught first with familiar material. From this point the curriculum moves on, but later it comes back to the same skill or concept, now teaching it with more complex or less familiar material. With this sequencing approach, once a skill is taught, it is neither dropped from further treatment nor drilled over and over with the same content. Later curriculum topics reinforce the content of earlier ones by providing new connections to, and refinements of, what was learned before. Another sequencing issue involves when basic skills are taught, as discussed above.

We observed some examples of what we judged to be sound, carefully considered instructional sequences. One example was the class briefly described above as an example of integrated basic skills instruction. The class included shop, blueprint, and mathematics components. The sequence of occupational skills training in the shop was used to structure the blueprint and math components. Thus, because early shop exercises required measurement, the math component covered translating fractions (which were used on the blueprints) to decimals (which are found on the tools). Later, when students were required to compute how much of certain materials would have to be purchased for a shop project, requiring addition and subtraction of product dimensions, the math teaching covered adding and subtracting of mixed numbers. In this way, it was ensured that the math content taught would be relevant to the job and that students could both see the relevance and get practice in applying the math skills in a job context.

An example of poor sequencing was observed in one of the computer clerical/bookkeeping courses. Instead of having students learn their

first word processing program well before moving on to other word processing systems, the course had students move around continuously (e.g., from WordStar to WordPerfect to MultiMate). This kind of sequence produces negative transfer and slows learning.

Instructional Methods

A wide variety of instructional methods are available. Simulations of job tasks, group projects, peer tutoring, computer-based instruction, video, demonstration, coaching, and lecture are among the options. There is no one appropriate method, but there are guidelines for selecting methods appropriate to the nature of what one is trying to teach (Reiser & Gagne, 1983). Lecture and textbooks can impart knowledge (if students have the background knowledge needed to make sense of the content) but are ineffective for training skills. Skill acquisition requires practice, preferably with diagnostic feedback and coaching. Attitudinal learning, on the other hand, is fostered through observing a role model of the behaviors associated with the desired attitudes.

The instructional methods being used most often in JTPA classroom occupational training programs are lecture, practical exercises, field experiences, and seat work.

Every program observed uses lectures for at least part of the instruction. The average proportion of class hours devoted to lectures is 35%.

Almost all of the programs (95%) have students doing practical exercises in class for at least part of the program. Within this group, the average proportion of class time devoted to practical or "laboratory" exercises is 49%. Six programs have a field component; these range from 5% of the total program time to 75% of it. Overall, we consider this emphasis on methods appropriate for training skills to be a strength of the JTPA-supported classroom programs.

Seven of the programs we studied use "seat work" -- filling out workbooks. Some programs show filmstrips or videotapes. We did not observe use of any advanced instructional media, such as interactive videodisc, intelligent tutoring systems, computer-based simulations, or distance learning (telecommunications-based systems).

Promotion of Active Learning. Research shows that the degree to which a learner acquires new knowledge or skill will be a function of the extent to which the learner has been active in thinking about the new information or practicing the skill. This general principle suggests that good training programs employ instructional strategies that ensure that students actively process material, rather than passively reading or listening and then parroting back material that is not necessarily understood. Although it is difficult to guarantee that students will be actively engaged in learning, some instructional methods have better prospects than others. Practical exercises where the student must transform provided information and produce a product tend to be more successful than reading assignments and lectures. We would argue that this is particularly true for JTPA clients, many of whom have found traditional classrooms unengaging and discouraging.

Because lecture formats are more susceptible to encouraging passive learning, we were particularly interested in examining the proportion of time in each program devoted to lectures. As Figure III-10 indicates, most programs use lectures for 31-40% of class hours. Taken in conjunction with the high proportion of class time devoted to practical exercises in most programs, this suggests that the JTPA classroom training should receive fairly high marks for employing instructional methods that promote active learning. Only three programs use lectures for more than 50% of their instruction. All of these are offered by community colleges, suggesting that the course of instruction had not really been adapted to meet the needs of JTPA clients.

Based upon the classes observed, site visitors judged about 50% of the JTPA-supported programs to be good at promoting active learning. About 20% were judged to be poor. These judgments were compared for

Figure III-10

Distribution of Instructional Methods in Classroom Occupational Training Programs

% of Method	Lecture (%)	Practical Exercises	Field Experience	Seat Work	Other
0	0 (0)	1 (5)	16 (73)	15 (68)	20 (90)
1 - 10	2 (9)	1 (5)	2 (9)	3 (14)	1 (5)
11 - 20	3 (14)	--	1 (5)	3 (14)	--
21 - 30	3 (14)	2 (9)	1 (5)	--	--
31 - 40	11 (50)	2 (9)	1 (5)	--	1 (5)
41 - 50	--	4 (18)	--	--	--
51 - 60	--	7 (32)	--	1 (5)	--
61 - 70	2 (9)	3 (14)	--	--	--
71 - 80	--	--	1 (5)	--	--
81 - 90	--	2 (9)	--	--	--
91 - 100	1 (5)	--	--	--	--
Total[a]	22 (101)	22 (101)	22 (102)	22 (101)	22 (100)

[a] Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding.

programs differing in their dependence on the lecture method, as shown in Figure III-11. The group of programs judged poor in terms of promoting active learning is composed entirely of programs that devote a large proportion of class time to lectures.

We do not want to leave the impression that lectures are necessarily a bad instructional method or that they are incompatible with active learning. When the "lecture" is delivered in an interactional style that includes a give and take with students, it can be very effective in getting students to think and test their ideas. A positive example of use of this kind of interactive lecture/discussion was observed in a course for medical secretaries. The instructor would pose a question to the students, such as why it is important to record the patient's phone number for every appointment. She would take the time for the students to figure out the answer (in this case, the possibility that rescheduling would be required) and then move into simulated phone situations, varying the scenario so that students could see how appropriate responses would be different.

Systematic Evaluation

Written tests, if well constructed, are appropriate for assessing occupation-related knowledge, but not very good for assessing skills. For this reason, hands-on or practical tests are an appropriate part of the evaluation in an occupational training program. Most of the classroom training programs (64%) used a combination of written and practical tests to evaluate student progress. One program used practical examinations only and seven (32%) used written tests only.

Some of the examinations appeared to be good evaluations in that they required application of learned skills under job-relevant conditions. For instance, a business program used a final exam in which students had to apply what they had learned about various software programs to a set of job tasks. As on the job, manuals were available for use in completing the test. An example of a poor evaluation system is that of a carpentry class that used written tests composed mostly of

Figure III-11

Relationship betwen Promotion of Active Learning and Proportion of Class Time Spent in Lecture

Active Learning Rating	Number of Programs	Mean Percent of Class Time Spent in Lecture
High	11	26%
Medium	7	32
Low	4	65

sentence completion and true/false items. The knowledge and test-taking skills needed to pass such tests do not necessarily indicate competence at working with wood.

Pacing

There are two frequently used methods for pacing instruction. In group-paced instruction, everybody studies the same material at the same time. Given a fixed amount of time, different learners will master the material to differing degrees, and an individual student is moved to the next piece of content along with the class even if he or she is still weak on prior material. In self-paced or individualized instruction, each student moves through the course content at his or her own speed. Self-pacing is one component of competency-based instruction (which also entails diagnosing the entering student's specific strengths and weaknesses and teaching only what the individual still needs to learn at any point during the program). Self-paced programs often allow students to come into the program at any time and to leave whenever they have mastered all course objectives ("open entry/open exit").

Most of the classroom occupational training programs we studied are group-paced or "lock-step" (73%) rather than open entry/open exit (27%). In part, this is probably a function of what is convenient for the provider -- when individual referral to community college classes is used, the program is likely to have to conform to the college's regular schedule (although some community colleges have shown more flexibility in designing programs for JTPA trainees). Problems can arise, of course, when the class pace does not fit the learning speed of the client, and we found several instances where this problem had occurred. On the other hand, there can also be drawbacks to open entry/open exit programs. Use of this structure often means that only one or two students are starting a program at any one time. This can greatly limit the instructional methods that can be used. For example, one observed program for retail clerks was set up with a well-equipped practice store for student role playing, yet there was only a single student enrolled so the resource was not used.

It should be noted that use of lock-step pacing is inconsistent with an individualized or competency-based approach to training. Doing individual diagnosis and training program design makes sense only if the individual will be given enough training time to achieve his or her objectives. To the extent that SDAs move toward requiring competency-based training from classroom providers, they will need to push for variable-length programs as well because different students require different amounts of time to master the same objectives.

Transfer

The purpose of occupational classroom training is to produce transfer to the job setting. Without transfer, the training is of little utility. But transfer has proved to be elusive in many training efforts, and therefore continues to be a topic for much research. We can say several general things about how to teach for transfer: (1) teach the target skills, not related skills or "nice to know" information; (2) teach skill performance under conditions as similar as possible to those under which the skill will be performed on the job; and (3) teach principles of application -- students need to learn when to apply a skill as well as how to apply it.

This third principle is violated by many classroom training programs (Simon, 1980). A very typical case was described by one of the JTPA participants. For each unit in her accounting course she learned a procedure and then completed a set of job-like exercises using that procedure. She had no trouble doing so and believed that she was progressing well. On the exams, however, she faced a whole set of exercises and did not know which procedure to apply. Without being able to assume that what you have just been taught is the procedure to use and without explicit training on when to apply which procedure, the trainee was lost.

A good example of teaching for transfer was observed in a course for medical secretaries. First, the class was taught three strategies for booking patients ("wave", "double booking", and "regular"

schedules). After demonstrating the procedures, the instructor discussed principles for when to use each. Finally, students were given hypothetical situations in which to practice both deciding which procedure to apply and applying it.

Site visitors felt that the majority of classroom programs were pretty good about teaching for transfer: efforts were made to use realistic equipment and to mimic job site conditions. Instructors generally covered when to use a skill or piece of knowledge as well as how to use it. Only 15% of classes were judged to be weak on this dimension.

Instructor Characteristics

Adapting to feedback. Good instructors use student questions and student errors as an opportunity to diagnose the nature of the student's understanding of the material. They then adapt their instruction in light of this diagnosis. The majority of the instructors we observed were fairly skilled at understanding students' questions or nonverbal cues of comprehension failure and modifying their instruction appropriately. There were, however, quite a few cases of instructors who showed markedly poor skill in this area. One instructor in a computer clerical/bookkeeping class demonstrated how to use software in a morning lecture session and instructed students to hold all their questions until the afternoon lab. In another class, when a student asked a question about some instructions he didn't understand, the instructor merely repeated the original instructions in a louder voice. The instructor for an accounting class told the site visitor that he saw no need to make any changes in his instructional program even though every student in the class failed the first test.

Effective use of time. Educational research shows that teachers vary markedly in terms of the proportion of class time their students actually spend on task, and this time-on-task variable is one of the better predictors of student achievement. Time-on-task measures are low in classes where instructors take a long time to bring the class to

order, discussions wander off topic, or the teacher spends time fumbling with equipment. Within the sample of programs we observed, the instructor's skill at using time effectively was fairly normally distributed, with equal numbers being quite good and quite poor at this classroom management skill.

Instructor experience. In addition to observing instructors, we asked them several questions about their backgrounds. One issue of concern was whether instructors had practical experience in the industry for which they were conducting training. A teacher with no on-the-job experience would have difficulty knowing what content is really important in the work world and describing the situations under which various skills should be used. The interviews showed that almost all of the instructors for JTPA-supported classroom occupational training had experience in the relevant occupation. There were only two exceptions noted out of the observed classes.

We questioned instructors also about whether they had had any formal training in how to teach. The staff appear less well-qualified on this dimension. Six of the instructors (27%) had had no formal training in how to teach.

These background characteristics may explain why instructors are more consistently good on the teaching for transfer dimension, which requires knowledge of job conditions, than on dimensions, such as effective use of time, which are more related to skills taught in teacher training programs.

Summary of Quality of Training

The quality of classroom training observed covered the gamut from good to poor. As a group, the programs' strong points were the emphasis on occupational skills training, practical exercises, and teaching for transfer. They were weaker on the dimensions of incorporating basic skills training and employing interactive instructional techniques and

meaningful, systematic assessment procedures. Instructor quality was quite variable.

We derived a subjective summary rating of training quality by identifying those programs that were rated highly on most of the training quality variables and had poor ratings on none of them. Six of the 22 programs (27%) met this criterion. We then sought other variables (e.g., provider type) related to training quality. As shown in Figure III-12, three of the highly rated programs were offered by proprietary schools, one by a community college, one by a county hospital, and one by a state vocational education institution. One relationship suggested by the data is that highly rated programs are likely to cost more than those offering poorer instruction. The average cost to JTPA for the six highly rated programs is $2,375 per student compared to $1,682 for the 16 other programs.

Quality of Outcomes

Client Outcomes

Wherever possible, three former classroom training participants who had terminated positively were followed up to ascertain the type of job they had attained after training, their experience in the job over the 6-12 months since leaving training, and their satisfaction with the program. In total, 56 former participants who had obtained jobs after completing their classroom training were contacted. (Some programs did not have three former participants, either because the program was too new or because very few people finish the program. In other cases, we were unable to locate selected past participants.)

Training related placement. Overall, the classroom training programs perform very well in terms of getting students who complete the program into jobs related to the training. In fact, within our sample of past participants placed in jobs, 95% had received a placement in a training-related position.

Figure III-12

Characteristics of Programs

Rated Highly in Quality of Instruction

	Highly Rated Programs n = 6	Other Programs n = 16
Number of:		
Proprietary school	3	5
Other providers	3	9
Average cost per pupil	$2,375	$1,682

There is a caveat to this very positive statistic, however. Some of the positions were only loosely related to the training or used only a small portion of the skills that had been trained. Examples included jobs that required only some of the cabinetry skills acquired in a carpentry/building course and positions requiring only receptionist duties rather than use of any of the software programs learned in a fairly rigorous computer clerical course.

Wage at placement. The range of wages received at placement was from $3.35 to $13.00 an hour, and the median was $6.55. It was not uncommon to find that the wages obtained after training were not higher than what the participant had been earning prior to JTPA (sometimes this was regarded as an acceptable trade-off given a desired change of occupation and perceived chances for later advancement). Figure III-13 shows the wage range distribution for the 52 former participants for whom this information was available.

Fringe benefits. Some SDAs and providers told us that they have a policy of placing people only in jobs with fringe benefits while others do not actively pursue this goal. Overall, for our sample about 65% of jobs found after classroom training provided some benefits.

Job stability. While the job placement picture for JTPA-supported classroom training looks quite good, the picture for job stability is less positive. We noted whether follow-up participants were still in either their placement position or in an equally good or better position in a training-related field. For our sample, about 60% of cases followed up met this criterion. Certainly, not all of this instability can be construed as evidence that the jobs were of poor quality. However, there were enough cases where the jobs had low wages, a history of high turnover, or poor working conditions to warrant concern.

Figure III-14 relates the type of assessment conducted by the SDA (as discussed in Chapter II) to outcomes such as job stability. Although we are working with small numbers (8 SDAs doing subjective assessment only and 11 doing detailed objective assessment), the relationship

Figure III-13

Distribution of Initial Wages for Sample of Computers of Classroom Occupational Training Programs

Hourly Wage	Frequency	%
$ 3.00 - 3.99	4	(8)
4.00 - 4.99	5	(10)
5.00 - 5.99	8	(15)
6.00 - 6.99	10	(19)
7.00 - 7.99	13	(25)
8.00 - 8.99	2	(4)
9.00 - 9.99	1	(2)
10.00 - 10.99	7	(13)
11.00 and over	2	(4)
Total	52	(100)

Figure III-14

Relationship Between SDA Assessment Practices and Quality of Outcomes

	SDA Assessment Practices	
	Subjective	Objective
Number of Programs	8	11
Outcomes:		
Client Satisfied	67%	54%
Stable Job	41%	80%

between job stability and type of assessment for the former participants in our sample appears quite large -- 41% of clients from SDAs using subjective assessment only were in stable jobs compared to 80% for SDAs using objective procedures.

Client satisfaction. Former participants were asked for their assessment of the worth of the classroom training program in helping them to advance in their occupational goals. On the whole, the former participants' views of their classroom training were positive. Around 65% said they were very satisfied. Only 10% expressed strongly negative views. Figure III-14 suggests that SDA assessment procedures are not strongly related to client satisfaction (if anything, clients from SDAs using subjective assessment report somewhat higher satisfaction).

Employer Outcomes

Employers of former participants were contacted and interviewed concerning the appropriateness of the curriculum used in the training program and the quality of program graduates.

Match between curriculum and job requirements. Employers' opinions about the curriculum match were positive. Roughly three-quarters of those contacted regarded the classroom training as a good match to job requirements. Only some 5% described it as a poor match. In only one or two cases did we encounter reports of a program lacking enough depth to train the skills employers expected of entry-level workers in the occupation. More often, the programs trained skills that were simply not required by many employers. For example, a number of the clerical/ bookkeeping programs trained many more software packages than were used by any one employer. This is not necessarily bad, however, if trainees acquire greater confidence and potential mobility. In some cases employers were candid in saying they didn't care about the content of the training. Their main interest was in the fact that classroom training graduates had been prescreened and had the motivation and steady habits to get through a course of training.

Employer satisfaction. Like client satisfaction, employer satisfaction with the training program may be colored by variables other than program quality. It is difficult to separate program effects from individual traits when you have experience with just one or two program graduates. Nevertheless, employer satisfaction evaluations give us some picture of the image of JTPA classroom training programs in local employer communities, and this image is a positive one. Over 60% of the employers contacted said they were quite satisfied with the classroom training program; no employer expressed a strong negative opinion about the program as a whole.

Summary on Quality of Outcomes

For each described position, we made a subjective summary judgment of job quality. Factors considered in making this judgment were wage level, job skill requirements, and advancement relative to the participant's past employment. An example of a job we rated as high in quality is a licensed practical nurse position at $10.50 an hour with full benefits. Examples of jobs regarded as not high in quality are a phone answering service position at $3.50 an hour for a graduate of a $5,000 rigorous computer clerical/bookkeeping program and a $3.50 an hour job at a computer wire and cable firm for someone who had earned a higher wage prior to completing a 14-week electronics assembly course.

Combining these judgments across participants, we estimate that only about half of the jobs obtained after classroom training are high-quality placements. Thus, the high rate of training-related job placements noted above needs to be considered in light of the fact that a significant proportion of the jobs are related to the training but not at the level initially anticipated by the client nor at the level trained for. In quite a few cases, we were told that local employers simply did not have jobs calling for all the acquired skills. In other cases, employers do not hire workers into the position trained for without an education credential or level of work experience lacking in many JTPA participants. For example, in one case, a program was established with the idea that it would lead to $7-an-hour jobs with two

major manufacturers, but all of the former participants ended up in $4.67-an-hour jobs at a much less desirable company because it was the only employer that did not require high school completion for employment.

Another factor that reduced placement quality in some programs was the provider's eagerness to place participants so that the provider would earn the full fixed unit price. These participants were "underplaced."

Examining the job quality ratings on the program level, we found that only seven of the programs led to quality jobs for two or more of the three sampled past participants. These programs led to jobs as a licensed practical nurse, a nurse's aide, a Medicare examiner, an electrical assembly technician, an accounting assistant, a computer technician, and a computer/clerical worker. These programs were neither significantly longer than average (677 hours compared to the average of 623) nor significantly more expensive ($2,292 compared to $2,045). Four of the seven more successful programs are offered by community colleges, two by proprietary schools, and one by a county hospital. We compared the admissions criteria for these programs to those for the other programs and found that they are no more selective than the others in terms of admission decisions. In fact, two of the seven were designed principally for the hard-to-serve (welfare recipients).

Figure III-15 relates our findings regarding the relationship between high quality instruction and high performance in terms of obtaining quality jobs. Of the six programs we rated highly in terms of the instructional quality variables, 50% placed a majority of the past participants we sampled in quality jobs compared to just 25% of the other programs. Moreover, two-thirds of the programs rated high in terms of instructional quality were in areas of high unemployment so their success is not just an artifact of better economic conditions. Although our small sample of programs and past participants make these results suggestive rather than conclusive, they do support the position

Figure III-15

Relationship between Instructional Quality and Quality of Outcomes (Percentages appear in parentheses)

	High Instructional Quality	Other Programs
Number	6 (67)	16
Unemployment Rate		
High	4 (67)	7 (44)
Low	2 (33)	9 (56)
Quality of Outcomes		
High	3 (50)	4 (25)
Low	3 (50)	12 (75)

that an improvement in instructional quality of JTPA training would lead to improved outcomes.

Summary and Conclusion

In this section we review the major results regarding the quality of occupational classroom training programs and make recommendations for steps that SDAs could take to improve program quality.

Quality of Match

- Availability of services for the hard-to-serve. Given the emphasis on performance in JTPA, there is concern that classroom training providers will restrict their program to those of higher skill levels and employability, limiting classroom training options for the hard-to-serve. Of the sampled programs, a little over a third are selective (not open to those without at least eighth-grade skills or a secondary education credential). Although some SDAs do not have classroom training offerings for those with lower skill levels (as discussed in Chapter II), the majority of programs are open to those with limited educational qualifications. Two programs were designed specifically for welfare recipients and one was designed for drop-out youth. In addition, one SDA designed all of its classroom training programs for clients with low basic skills.

- Match to occupational interests. The majority of client records suggested that the occupation trained for was either a career interest of the participant or an area in which he or she had some prior experience. Only 5% of the records reviewed suggested that the client's occupational interests had been ignored.

- Match to skill level. In roughly one out of six cases, the client's skill level appeared inappropriate for the class to which he or she was assigned. In most cases the client's reading or math level was below that required for the class, but in some cases the client appeared over-qualified, having already had training and work experience in the occupation.

- Match to working conditions. Interviews with past participants pointed up problems in making the occupation's working conditions explicit to clients before they enter training. Although it is quite possible that they had been warned of conditions, clients in about one-seventh of the programs felt unpleasantly surprised to find that night shift work, seasonal employment, or long stretches of time away from home were characteristic of local jobs in their chosen occupation.

- Match to employment requirements. A few programs seemed to be somewhat out-of-date in terms of the equipment and procedures taught. One program was regarded as inadequate training for entry-level positions by local employers. More often, the program taught more than was required for the positions in which participants were placed. This appeared to be the case for almost a third of the programs in our sample.

Quality of Training

- Clarity of objectives. Only one program was able to provide us with a clearly written, comprehensive set of student-centered skill-based objectives. More often, students were given a list of topics which would not tell them what they would be able to do upon course completion.

- Occupational relevance. The occupational relevance of classroom training content was judged to be high in over three-quarters of the programs in our sample. Only one program was judged to be seriously deficient on this dimension.

- Curriculum content. The programs consistently stress occupational skills and knowledge. Basic skills, world of work, and job search skills are each included in 50-60% of programs. Motivation or life skills were included in only a few programs.

- Incorporation of basic skills. For those occupational classroom training programs that contain a basic skills component, that component averages 14% of the program curriculum. Roughly a third of the classroom training programs incorporate basic skills training into the same classes as occupational training. About a quarter of the programs have separate, required basic skills classes. (There is some overlap between these two groups.) In both cases, math is more likely than reading or writing to be incorporated into the curriculum.

- Logic of the sequence of instruction. In many cases, the curriculum descriptions available were not detailed enough to permit an analysis of the degree of instructional logic used in planning the curriculum. A few cases of obviously poor sequences were observed.

- Instructional methods. The most commonly used instructional method was practical exercises conducted within the classroom or lab (an average of 53% of classtime for the 75% of programs using it). This is appropriate for a program with an occupational orientation. The average proportion of class time devoted

to lecture was 35%. Only three programs devoted a majority of training hours to lecture.

- Promotion of active learning. Active learning entails transforming content physically or mentally and leads to better skill acquisition and retention. About half of the observed classrooms were judged to be good at promoting active learning and one fifth were judged to be poor. All of the latter classes were in programs that devote a large proportion of their class time to lectures.

- Training for transfer. The majority of programs showed concern with teaching in a way to encourage transfer of learned skills to on-the-job performance. Efforts were made to use realistic equipment and mimic job conditions. Only some 15% of programs were judged as poor in terms of teaching for transfer, with the usual weaknesses being (1) failure to teach skills rather than just impart information or (2) when skills are taught, failure to teach principles of when to use each trained procedure.

- Systematic evaluation. All of the classroom training programs included assessments of individual progress. Roughly two-thirds of the programs used a combination of practical and written tests while one-third used written tests only. The latter practice is generally inappropriate for programs whose purpose is to impart job skills. Moreover, some of the written tests appeared to require only rote learning rather than inference or application of concepts.

- Pacing of instruction. Nearly three-quarters of the programs were group-paced and only one-quarter open entry/open exit.

In general, the JTPA-supported occupational classroom training programs appear to be good in terms of stressing skills training, practical exercises, and training for transfer. They appear weaker in terms providing clear statements of course objectives, integrating basic skills development with occupational training, and using assessment procedures appropriate to their instructional goals. Using the dimensions in our quality of training model, six of the programs were rated as high in terms of overall quality. These programs were more likely to be offered by proprietary schools and to cost JTPA more per student than the average CRT program.

Quality of Outcomes

- Training-related placement. Among those JTPA clients who complete classroom training and obtain jobs, nearly all (95%) find positions that are classified as training related.

- Quality of placements. The mean wage for post-training placements in our sample is $6.55. Almost a third of those who complete the program and find a job, however, earn less than $6.00 an hour, which is less than their prior earnings in many cases. Considering both wage earned given the client's employability and the skill level and opportunities for advancement in the job, we judged half of the classroom training placements to be high-quality jobs. In other cases, the clients had either been overtrained given the local job market or "under placed", put in jobs that only required a small portion of the skills they had acquired through training.

- Job stability. Our follow-up of participants who were positive classroom training terminations 6-12 months ago found that only 60% were either still in the same job or one that was equally good and still training-related.

- Client and employer satisfaction. Former participants and their employers expressed overall satisfaction with the classroom training programs. Almost two-thirds of the former participants interviewed described themselves as very satisfied and only 10% expressed strongly negative views. Sixty percent of employers expressed quite positive views and none expressed a strongly negative opinion about the program as a whole.

Comparing outcomes to instructional quality ratings, we found that programs rated high in quality of instruction were more likely to produce high-quality outcomes. This suggests that greater attention to the process of assessment and instruction in classroom training programs would reap benefits in terms of the quality of jobs obtained.

Recommendations

Local control of the selection and monitoring of providers leads to the widest possible diversity in training philosophy and approach. Our findings suggest that a more active SDA role in monitoring the quality of instruction provided could improve the quality of outcomes obtained. More specifically, we make several recommendations:

1. Review the realism of each class' occupational goals and the relevance of its curriculum given the local labor market. The SDA should ensure that the jobs being trained for are available in the local community and that the content of the course is a good match to employer requirements. (Some SDAs have accomplished this through surveys of employers or employer forums.) There are potential problems both with courses that are too thin to produce the skills needed to obtain stable employment in good jobs and with courses that teach much more than is used in any of the local jobs available. Although it is not necessarily bad to train JTPA clients to the level of the "next job," there were quite a few cases where classroom training content was simply not relevant to jobs in the local area.

2. Review the validity of program entrance requirements. The rationale for program entrance requirements was often unclear. SDAs should make sure that the entrance requirements are neither unduly restrictive, so that getting into the program becomes an unnecessary employment barrier, nor so lax that many participants are assigned to a program within which they have little chance of success.

3. Require classroom training providers to submit a comprehensive skill-based set of curriculum objectives. This requirement would serve to emphasize the fact that JTPA is supporting training that imparts occupational skills to its clients. A comprehensive set of objectives written in terms of skills to be learned (competencies) would clarify program goals, permitting a more thorough review of program content. It would also provide a useful tool for the assessment and placement process since the person advising the client could show him or her exactly what would be learned in the course.

4. Give preference to providers that integrate basic skills and occupational training. As the JTPA program moves toward providing more services to those with basic skills deficiencies, it will have to address these needs. Programs that integrate basic skills training with occupational content are both more palatable to clients and have better prospects for producing basic skill improvements that will be felt on the job.

5. Monitor classroom instruction to check on the appropriateness of methods used and the quality of instruction. Most classroom instructors have never been observed by anyone from the SDA. Although the SDA's function does not include involvement in the details of instruction, it should have knowledge of the nature of the training offered and the level of instruction. In addition to keeping the SDA better informed, such visits would have value in motivating providers to self-monitor the quality of instruction within their programs.

6. Evaluate the match between job placements and curriculum content. Performance standards have led SDAs to keep careful records of whether each placement is training related and its wage rate. What does not get evaluated is the extent to which the jobs in which participants are placed use the skills learned in the course. We found many cases of gross mismatches, such as clients completing rigorous computer/clerical courses only to be placed in "training related" jobs as phone answerers. By evaluating the match between job skill requirements and skills provided in classroom training, the SDA would have grounds for deciding whether the courses are unnecessarily rigorous or the provider is insufficiently selective in making placements.

We believe that implementation of these recommendations would improve the quality of classroom instruction provided, thus leading to acquisition of higher and more enduring skill levels, and better quality job placements, which should in turn reduce job turnover after JTPA placement.

BASIC SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAMS

Recent commission reports and popular press articles alike warn of the increasing gap between the skills required for jobs and the basic skill levels of American workers. Although 95% of the American population possesses very basic literacy and numerical skills, an estimated half (Sticht, 1988) to three-quarters (Hudson Institute) of workers are limited by their level of literacy skills (i.e., unable to comprehend reasonably complex sets of instructions or to write simple reports). After surveying business representatives nationwide, the Building a Quality Workforce authors concluded that "Employers are practically unanimous in their concern that competencies of entry level workers are deficient. These include the basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics, and communication." Moreover, it can be argued that basic skills are even more important for job advancement than for entry-level employment. As employees move up the occupational ladder, they are held more and more accountable for training themselves to perform new functions. They tend to be given increased responsibility for presenting information to others -- both orally and in writing -- and for doing independent reading to figure out how to perform new functions. Thus, if the goal of JTPA is not just to obtain entry-level jobs but to prepare participants for career advancement, an emphasis should be placed upon improving their ability to read, compute, and write in occupational settings.

We have argued above for the practice of integrating basic skills instruction with occupational training. We have also pointed out that the basic skills content in the classroom training programs we studied was typically relatively meagre. In this section we describe our findings regarding JTPA-funded basic skills programs. Before describing what we found, it may be helpful to do a brief review of what is known about effective basic skills training.

In a recent review of adult basic education programs identified by the Department of Education for Educational Programs that Work, Gagne and Dowd (1989) drew five conclusions:

- Among classroom programs, the most effective use a competency-based approach with refined diagnosis of the student's individual reading, math, and writing needs.

- Adult basic skills students appear to be more comfortable in programs based in a worksite rather than in a school. Students are more likely to attend programs at a worksite.

- Students prefer working in small, cooperative groups to either whole-class instruction or individualized work.

- Students who get release time or pay for attending basic skills classes are more likely to attend regularly.

- For those with the greatest basic skills deficits, a community or family-based program may be most effective.

To these recommendations we would add an important lesson learned from military basic skills training programs:

- A functional context approach, in which basic skills are taught with job relevant materials and tasks, will lead to more improvement on job tasks requiring basic skills and better duration for gains achieved (Sticht, Armstrong, Hickey, & Caylor, 1987).

Overview of the Selected Programs

As described above, the training activities we reviewed at each SDA were selected with a probability proportional to the number of clients served. Selecting 45 training activities on this basis (three at each SDA) led to the inclusion of just four basic skills training programs in our study. This fact is itself significant in that it suggests that basic skills training programs are not prominent among JTPA services for adults.

Of the four programs selected, one is operated by a proprietary school, one by a community college, and two by the SDAs themselves. All are open entry/open exit offering individualized programs tailored to the student's particular skill needs. JTPA-supported basic skills training is more likely than occupational training to be competency based.

All of the basic skills programs we studied emphasize preparation for the G.E.D. examination for those who do not have a high school diploma, but are open also to high school graduates and G.E.D. holders who need to improve their basic skills before entering occupational training.

All of the programs were in SDAs with fairly high unemployment levels and a history of "deindustrialization."

Given the small number of programs reviewed, we do not want to draw strong conclusions about the quality of JTPA-supported basic skills training programs as a whole. However, our observations are useful in that they included three basic skills programs that appear to be fairly typical and a fourth, more innovative program that suggests an alternative approach to a number of the issues facing designers of adult basic skills training.

Issues: Intensity, Duration, Cost, Integration

Development of basic skills such as reading comprehension or writing fluency takes time and practice. Although adult learners have certain advantages over children, there is no reason to assume that the skill development that requires years of work for children can be obtained in a few weeks or months by adults. Short courses are unlikely to have any significant lasting effects. Duffy (1976) found, for example, that over half of the two reading grade levels gained on test scores after completion of a brief Navy literacy program were lost after just a few weeks. Short programs aimed at boosting test scores by a grade level or two may have the desired effect of obtaining entrance to

some other program, but are unlikely to have lasting effects on the individuals' ability to function on the job and in society as a whole.

There is a great variation in the extent of basic skills deficiencies among JTPA clients. Some of them have reading and math levels as low as the fourth or fifth grade. While their learning needs argue for an intense, long-term program, a number of pragmatic considerations push SDAs toward designing shorter basic skills programs. The SDAs are concerned with cost per participant and the fact that their funding could not possibly provide intensive basic skills training to all the eligible participants who need it. Additional pressure to keep programs relatively brief come from the client perspective -- most clients are more interested in a job than in attending classes, particularly if the classes provide no obvious entry to employment. Clients usually require some kind of support and they may have trouble both making ends meet and maintaining their motivation level through a long basic skills training program. Attrition rates from basic skills programs are typically quite high.

Given these pressures, most SDAs offer fairly little in the way of basic skills training for adults. When such training is offered, there appear to be two kinds of users. First, there are those whose basic skills training needs are not too severe. These are people who need to pass the G.E.D. test or raise their skills by a grade level or two in order to qualify for an occupational program. Most JTPA-supported basic skills training is targeted toward this group. These clients are offered relatively small amounts of basic skills training focused on the particular areas where they need to improve. Longer basic skills training, designed for clients with more severe skill deficiencies, is offered in a few cases. When it is offered, only those receiving some other form of public assistance (e.g., AFDC) may be able to afford to undertake such an extended period of training. Those with severe skill deficiencies but a need for income tend not to be served.

Representative Programs

We will describe the three typical basic skills programs reviewed to illustrate how most SDAs have responded to the issues described above.

The first program, operated by the SDA itself, consists of computer learning centers for skills remediation and G.E.D. study. The SDA requires enrollees to spend at least two hours at the center twice a week. Those studying for the G.E.D. usually attend for 16-20 weeks although they can have as much time as they need. A gain of one grade level in either reading or math is counted as a positive termination. Support available during attendance is limited to $20 a week plus a transportation subsidy. No job counseling is offered in conjunction with the basic skills study. The SDA admits that very few adults enroll in this basic skills program.

The second program is quite similar. It is operated by an SDA, relies heavily on computer-assisted instruction, and considers a gain of one reading and one math grade level as a positive outcome. One difference is that the program design considers the range of basic skills deficiencies in JTPA clients. After administering the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) to new entrants, the program steers those scoring between the eighth and tenth grade levels toward G.E.D. study, those in the fifth to eighth grade range to Adult Basic Education (ABE), and those scoring below the fifth grade level to Principles of the Alphabetic Literacy System (PALS). (An estimated 20% of clients are in the third group.) Although much of the instruction is offered via computer, the program also uses videotapes (from the Kentucky Educational Television Network), texts, and some small group work. Clients choose their own hours; most attend mornings. Career exploration counseling is provided, and those who show exceptional motivation may be selected for work experience as aides in the learning center (at around $3.50 an hour). There is no other financial support available through JTPA. Students may work as long as they like, although the improvement

of a grade level must be achieved within 75 days to count as a positive termination.

The third program, offered by a proprietary school, is targeted at those who need to earn the G.E.D. or improve their grade level scores to gain admittance to an occupational training program. Part, but not all of this program involves computer-based instruction. The instructor is skilled at interweaving individualized competency-based exercises with small-group work. Career counseling is provided. Enrollees usually spend about 180 hours in the program. The school receives $750 per student from the SDA. Attendance is sporadic. (It is not mandatory, except to earn the transportation subsidy of $.50-.72 per day.) The SDA will provide childcare payments of $1.50 per hour plus $.35 per additional child if needed.

An Innovative Program

The fourth program we studied took a quite different approach to providing basic skills training. The program developers said that they instituted it after finding that they were unable to keep adults in programs that taught basic skills only. They cited three reasons for adults' reluctance to participate in pure basic skills programs: (1) inability to see how the training will help them get jobs, (2) fear of going into a school environment like that in which they have failed in the past, and (3) embarrassment about being in "school," which is a tacit admission that they can't read, write, or whatever.

The problems of providing enough basic skills training to make a difference and of maintaining client motivation through this process were addressed by committing more resources to the training and giving clients an incentive to complete it. The program consists of 960 hours over a six-month period. Half of the time is spent in basic skills classes and half in paid work experience. In addition to the competency-based basic skills training, classroom work includes intensive one-on-one career counseling and group job skills instruction.

Participants receive $3.35 an hour (or $13.40 per day) for their participation in work experience. They may not go to work experience if they did not attend class for the corresponding day and are suspended if they take more than three absences. Thus the program combines the carrot of paid work experience with the stick of sanctions for failure to observe program rules.

This program is unusual also in the level of supportive services provided. Child care is provided if the client is not already receiving it through another program. Bus passes are provided. The cost of the program is estimated at $2,700 plus wages for each participant. The program is thus more costly, more intense, and more integrated with occupational training than the more typical basic skills programs described above.

Conclusion

Our conclusions about basic skills training are not very positive. The JTPA program is not doing very much to improve the basic skills of adult participants. Moreover, what is being done, in most cases, is not designed in a way that meets the needs of the client population or that makes use of the available research on training effectiveness:

- Many SDAs offer nothing of sufficient depth and appropriate level for those with reading and mathematics skills below the eighth grade level.

- Basic skills programs are not offered at a worksite or linked with occupational skills training in any meaningful way.

- Most work is individualized, most often on a computer, and there is limited opportunity for small-group work and mutual support.

- The typical program offers no financial incentive for sticking with basic skills training.

- No program using a family or community context to motivate basic skills learning among those with severe needs was observed.

- There was only limited use of job relevant material to teach basic skills.

We are not holding up the one innovative program we saw as a national model -- it serves only clients with fairly small skill deficits and is quite expensive -- but it does demonstrate that innovative approaches are possible. The new JTPA legislation should give SDAs the incentive to provide more basic skills training for adults. Many SDAs would benefit from designing and implementing basic skills programs representing new approaches toward adult basic skill training. We see an important role for ETA in (1) providing technical assistance to encourage innovations that are based upon tested principles of effective instruction and (2) identifying successful programs that can serve as models for other SDAs.

IV. THE QUALITY OF ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

INTRODUCTION

In PY 87, approximately 30% of JTPA terminees received OJT services, roughly the same proportion that received classroom training in occupational skills. OJT can potentially offer several advantages over traditional classroom training. First, as discussed in Chapter II, OJT provides participants with immediate income, which many JTPA applicants need. Second, because the employer provides the training, the skills learned have clear job relevance, at least to that employer. Third, the training is mostly active learning-by-doing and participants immediately apply skills learned in a job context.

However, there are also several potential disadvantages to OJT relative to classroom training. First, unless SDAs match participants to jobs well, participants may not receive training in any new skills. Second, most employers are not skilled trainers, so the quality of instruction is likely to be highly variable and on average of lower quality than classroom training. Third, employers may train participants in skills specific for that job rather than in skills that can be used more broadly. Fourth, because most employers need to provide some training to any new employee, there is a risk that JTPA will pay employers for training that would been provided in any case.

In this chapter we evaluate the quality of training provided in OJT and identify SDA policies and practices that can improve OJT quality. This analysis is based on a sample of 93 individual examples of on-the-job training from the 14 case study SDAs that provided OJT services. As discussed in Chapter I, we selected training activities with probability proportional to the number of participants receiving each activity. For each OJT activity selected, we randomly selected two current OJT contracts and three OJT contracts that were completed approximately 6 months before our visit. (In five SDAs, two OJT activities were selected, resulting in samples of four current OJT contracts and six completed contracts in those SDAs.)

Across all 14 SDAs, we visited 38 current OJT worksites and discussed the training that was provided with both the employer and trainee. For the completed contracts, we attempted to contact both the employer and employee by telephone to learn about employment experiences after the end of the contract and also to discuss the training provided. We were able to contact at least one respondent (i.e., either the employer or trainee or both) for 55 completed OJT contracts. Throughout this report we have included information from both current and former participants when feasible. The findings in the section on of training methods, however, is based primarily on the 38 current participants and the section on outcomes is, by necessity, based on the 55 former participants.

As part of the evaluation of OJT services, we also interviewed OJT providers about their practices in developing and monitoring OJT contracts. We begin with a description of these provider practices. We then set forth criteria for judging the quality of OJT services and examine the sample of 93 OJT contracts using these criteria. For each set of criteria, we examine whether SDA and provider practices are related to the quality of OJT. The final section summarizes the findings and makes recommendations about practices to improve the quality of on-the-job training in JTPA.

OJT PROVIDER PRACTICES

In the sample of 14 SDAs that funded OJT services, six SDAs contracted with service providers to develop OJT contracts and eight SDAs developed OJT contracts directly. Among those that contracted out services, two SDAs chose the Employment Service (ES) as the exclusive provider of OJT services. Two others used the ES as one of their providers, one in conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce and the other as part of a team composed of SDA, ES, and community college staff. These SDAs used cost-reimbursement contracts. Two SDAs chose for-profit organizations to provider OJT services. Both of these SDAs used performance-based contracts and paid close to $1,500 per placement. One SDA required a 45-day post-subsidy retention of the job, but none of the

other contracts called for the OJT provider to follow-up after the end of the contract, and no SDA that provided OJT services directly routinely followed up after the subsidy ended.

Process of Match

Clearly an OJT contract requires agreement between the SDA or its provider, the employer, and the participant. We found, however, that participants were matched to jobs using three different processes. In the first process, the SDA or its provider initiates the match. Typically SDAs or providers develop potential OJT positions and maintain a "job bank" of listings, from which they match jobs to individuals that apply for the program. Less often, the staff determines the job interests of particular applicants and contacts appropriate employers to see if they are interested in an OJT contract for that person. All the SDAs in our sample included SDA-initiated matching as part of their OJT strategy; this type of match was used for approximately 60% of the OJT contracts in our sample.

The second type of match is the client-initiated match. In this case individuals who are assigned to the OJT activity are given an explanation of how OJT works and typically some job-search assistance. They are also given a letter describing how employers can get a subsidy for hiring them, which they can show to prospective employers. The clients are then responsible for searching for a employer who is willing to hire them. After the employer is identified by the client, the SDA or provider then contacts the employer to set up the contract. Two SDAs in our sample relied heavily on this type of matching process; approximately 10% of the contracts were a result of client-initiated matches.

The third type of match is the employer-initiated match. In this case employers familiar with the OJT program refer prospective employees to the SDA or its provider to determine whether they would qualify for an OJT subsidy. Such "reverse referrals" are checked for JTPA eligibility, and a OJT contract is then written with the referring

employer. Approximately 30% of the contracts in our sample were originated by employer-initiated matches.

All SDAs in our sample accepted employer-initiated reverse referrals, but three strongly encouraged employer-initiated matches. One SDA sent a brochure to employers describing OJT services, which advertised that the SDA would "screen your 'walk-in' job seekers to determine if they are eligible for our On-the-Job Training program." At least one SDA facilitated the reverse referral process by sending SDA staff to the worksite to conduct eligibility determination of job applicants and enrolling eligible applicants en masse. The employee in our sample who had gone through that process did not understand that she was enrolled or participating in any sort of program or that the employer was receiving payment for her training.

Most SDAs that accept such reverse referrals do little to inform the participant about other training options and generally do not provide such participants with other services. However, one SDA that had substantial reverse referrals recently required such individuals to attend a 3-day session on world-of-work skills because of the poor retention rate that they were achieving from their OJT placements.

In our sample the source of match was not related either to whether the SDA or a service provider developed OJT contracts. Further, the process of match was not related to the unemployment rate in the local economy; employer-initiated matches were just as common in tight as in loose labor markets. Client-initiated matches were too infrequent to compare their outcomes with other types of matches, but throughout this report we compare the quality of training that results from SDA-initiated and employer-initiated matches.

Terms of OJT Contracts

Typically the OJT employer pays the participant a wage rate normal for a new job entrant, and the SDA reimburses the employer for some fraction of the wage for a specified training period. The terms of the

OJT contracts, therefore, include the wage rate that the participant receives, the percent of the wage rate that is subsidized and the number of weeks that the wage rate is subsidized. The proportion of the wage rate subsidized varied little: in 91% of the cases, the subsidy rate was 50%. Among SDAs that varied the proportion of wage rate subsidized, only one routinely varied it depending on the characteristics of the client or job; the other SDAs used a lower subsidy rate only in unusual cases. For example, a participant who had already completed classroom training in the OJT occupation but was having trouble finding a job on his own was given a 25% wage subsidy.

Figure IV-1 shows the distribution of the sample of OJT contracts on the length of the training, the wage rate participants received, and the total amount of subsidy. The length of training ranged from 160 hours (4 weeks) to 1,816 hours (45.4 weeks) with a median of 480 hours (12 weeks). Six SDAs in our sample had adopted a set policy about the length of OJT contracts and did not vary it by participant or job characteristics. The other SDAs did vary the length of contracts, usually based on a subjective judgment of what was appropriate. For example, one SDA contracted with two providers for OJT services that had markedly different philosophies about the length of OJT. One wrote contracts for 200 hours to "save the taxpayers money" while the other wrote contracts for 1040 hours to "keep the employers happy." These differences in duration had no relationship to the skill requirements of the jobs or to participants' characteristics.

The wage rate that participants were paid varied from the minimum wage of $3.35 (6 cases) to over $14.00, with a median of $5.00 per hour. Half of the SDAs had established an explicit policy on the minimum wage rate for which an OJT contract could be written, ranging between $4.00 and $5.00 per hour.

Occupation of Training

For each OJT contract in our sample, we determined the Dictionary of Occupational Titles (DOT) code and the corresponding Specific

Figure IV-1

Distribution of Hours of Training, Training Wage Rate and Total OJT Subsidy in Sample of OJT Contracts

	Hours of Training	Training Wage Rate	Total Subsidy
Minimum	160	$ 3.35	$ 180
25th percentile	320	4.00	800
50th percentile	480	5.00	1,252
75th percentile	748	6.00	1,910
Maximum	1,816	14.53	4,767

Vocational Preparation (SVP) level, which indicates the skill levels of occupations. The distribution of occupations in the sample is presented in Figure IV-2. Clerical and sales occupations were the most common training goal. These occupations were also very common goals for classroom training, as discussed in Chapter III.

The SVP level, published by DOL for each occupation, indicates the amount of time required to learn the techniques, acquire the information and develop the facility needed for an occupation. The distribution of SVP levels for the our sample of OJT contracts is shown in Figure IV-3. There is a wide range on skills levels as indicated by the SVP level: 14% of the contracts were for jobs requiring less than 30 days to master while 25% were for jobs requiring 2 to 4 years to master.[1]

SDA Evaluation of OJT

SDAs and providers vary in the extent to which they monitor the progress of OJT participants. Four SDAs had not established any monitoring procedures for their OJT contracts. In one SDA staff visited the worksite when the OJT contract was signed, but in the other three no one routinely went on-site or even met the employer in person.

The remainder had established some procedure for monitoring OJT contracts. Most commonly, SDA or provider staff visited the OJT worksite during the contract period, although some made telephone contact and one SDA required employers to submit written reports. All SDAs or providers that monitored OJT contracts checked on the progress of the participant and tried to resolve any work-performance problems that had developed.

[1]We also examined the General Education Development level for each occupation, which indicates the educational level (formal or informal "life experiences") that contribute to the worker's reasoning development and ability to follow instructions and the acquisition of knowledge needed for the occupation. Three dimensions are specified for each occupation: reasoning, language, and mathematical development. Again there is considerable variation, but 42% of the contracts were for occupations requiring relatively high reasoning levels.

Figure IV-2

Distribution of Training Occupations for Sample of OJT Contracts

DOT Occupation	% of OJT Contracts
Professional, Technical Managerial	6
Clerical, Sales	32
Service	10
Agriculture and fishing	4
Processing	2
Machine trades	15
Benchwork	10
Structural	10
Miscellaneous	11
Total	100%

Figure IV-3

Distribution of SVP Level for Sample of OJT Contracts

SVP Level	% of OJT Contracts
1. Short demonstration only	0
2. 30 days or less	14
3. Over 30 days to 3 months	15
4. Over 3 months to 6 months	23
5. Over 6 months to 1 year	7
6. Over 1 year to 2 years	15
7. Over 2 years to 4 years	25
8. Over 4 years to 10 years	1
9. Over 10 years	0
Total	100%

Three SDAs, however, also explicitly monitored whether the employer was providing the training according to the contract.

One SDA had exemplary monitoring procedures. The SDA staff visited the worksite initially to set up the training curriculum with the employer. They then made three trips during the course of the contract to check both the progress of the participant and whether the required training was taking place. This SDA actually canceled two contracts in the last year because the employers were not providing the required training.

Whether the SDA had established monitoring procedures was not related to the unemployment rate of the local economy. SDAs were just as likely to monitor contracts in high unemployment areas, where the employers could be more selective, as in low unemployment areas.

QUALITY OF OJT SERVICES IN JTPA

Purpose of OJT

Evaluating the quality of OJT requires a clear definition of the purpose of OJT. DOL does not view OJT subsidies as "bribes" to buy participants jobs but instead views OJT subsidies as compensation for providing training. Consistent with that view, we begin by presenting the following definition:

- The employer provides training in skills that the participant needs to acquire to perform the job.

- There is a presumption that employment will continue if the specified skills are attained.

- The employer is compensated for the additional costs of training the JTPA participant over and above the costs normally incurred in training a new employee. These additional costs could occur:

-- If the participant has fewer skills at entry than an ordinary job entrant so that additional training is required.

-- If the perceived risks of hiring the JTPA participant are higher so that the expected training costs are higher. (That is, if the employer believes the participant is less likely to succeed than an ordinary job entrant and thus that turnover is more likely, then the employer risks additional costs to train a replacement.)

This definition distinguishes OJT from several other types of employment and training programs. OJT differs from work experience programs because of the expectation that participants will continue to work for their OJT employers beyond the training period. OJT differs from employment subsidies, such as the Targeted Jobs Tax Credit, which are intended solely as an inducement to hire a low income individual. As a result of OJT contracts, employers are expected to train participants in additional skills. OJT differs from direct placement into jobs that offer training because OJT subsidies are expected to increase participants' access to those jobs by compensating employers for the additional training costs of hiring individuals they would not ordinarily hire.

Specifying that OJT payments should compensate employers for additional training costs rather than simply training costs may be controversial, but it is important if JTPA resources are to increase training available to disadvantaged workers. OJT payments are intended to induce employers to do something that they would not do without the subsidy. Finding participants jobs that offer training opportunities is certainly beneficial, but if the employer would have hired the participant directly without a subsidy, OJT funds could be better used for other purposes.

One reason this provision -- that OJT subsidize only additional training costs -- may be controversial is that individual participants may benefit from OJT services even if there is no additional training provided and even if the employer does not hire riskier employees as a result of the subsidy. Because the OJT payment lowers the cost of hiring a particular individual, the employer is much more likely to hire that person than other equally qualified applicants. Thus, the OJT participant benefits from reduced job-search costs, which could be substantial in areas of high unemployment. However, if the employer would have normally hired someone just like that OJT participant in the absence of the OJT payment, then the participant simply displaces some other low-income job seeker. If this is the case, OJT funds result only in a reshuffling of jobs among disadvantaged workers but not any net increase in the training of those workers. Nonetheless, the SDA could correctly perceive that it is helping each individual participant.

Clearly it is very difficult for SDAs to accurately judge what employers would have done in the absence of the OJT subsidy. However, SDAs can operationalize this criterion by assessing whether the OJT subsidy increases the participant's access to skills-training and employment opportunities over and above what they would have eventually found on their own. We discuss this issue further and provide specific examples in the section on the appropriateness of specific OJT contracts.

The 14 SDAs in our sample that funded OJT services varied widely in their view of the purpose of OJT. All SDAs had strong expectations that OJT jobs would continue after OJT contracts ended.[2]

Most SDAs in the sample indicated that they would not work with an employer again if the employer fired the participant shortly after the

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[2] In only one case in a high-unemployment SDA area, an OJT contract was written for a public agency with a clear understanding by the SDA, participant, and employer that the job was temporary. The job did help the participant to find work in a training-related field after the OJT contract ended.

contract. One SDA, however, had written 12 OJT contracts over time for a single position with obviously high turnover.

Five SDAs did not view the purpose of OJT as providing training in new skills. Two of these SDAs viewed OJT as a service to employers. Another SDA used OJT as an alternative to classroom training for those without skills or high school diplomas and wrote contracts for very low skill jobs. The third took the opposite approach and required that OJT participants have a diploma, a marketable skill and at least one year of work experience so that the participants "would be competitive with other job applicants." The resulting contracts were often for jobs in which the participant had previous experience and, therefore, provided little in the way of new skills. An OJT contractor for this SDA stated that the payment "is a bribe. That's exactly what it is, a bribe."

The other SDA in this category had recently changed staff and was trying to upgrade the OJT program. The previous OJT contracts we examined were very short term and for low skill jobs. One previous employer told the SDA staff that there was no training for the job and she preferred not to bother with the paperwork for the small OJT subsidy. The SDA insisted on writing the contract anyway.

Five other SDAs in the sample clearly viewed the purpose of OJT as providing training, but did not explicitly identify the goal that the subsidy should increase the participant's access to training over what they could find on their own. These SDAs generally tried to assess whether the OJT job involved substantial training but often reserved these services for the most job ready applicants. Two of these SDAs used the ES as the OJT provider, and its role of improving labor exchange seemed to predominate. For example, the ES in one SDA clearly screened its job orders for jobs with substantial training opportunities but also extensively screened participants to find the most skilled individuals. Their goal was to match the best jobs to the best people for OJT positions.

The remaining four SDAs clearly viewed OJT subsidies as compensation to employers for providing training to individuals they ordinarily would not have hired. One SDA had a policy of explicitly informing employers that the payment was for training workers who were less experienced than they might ordinarily desire. Another SDA used a "market screen" to determine which individuals needed OJT contracts. Participants first looked for jobs on their own; those that could not succeed without a subsidy were then given OJT contracts, providing "extra advocacy" for those that needed to upgrade their skills. This SDA also wrote longer contracts with employers who agreed to release time for employees to participate concurrently in classroom training. A third SDA wrote longer OJT contracts for riskier clients. In the fourth SDA, the job developer clearly understood that her goal was to find jobs that provided training and where the subsidy made a difference in whether the participant would be hired.

Criteria for Quality OJT Services

From the objectives of OJT outlined above, we have modified the criteria discussed for classroom training to apply to OJT, as follows:

- Quality of Match to Participants' Needs. Because the job is expected to continue, it should:
  - -- Be matched to the participant's occupational interests and abilities,
  - -- Be matched to the participant's required working conditions,
  - -- Be matched to the participant's financial needs and alternatives,
  - -- Provide the participant with needed skills, and
  - -- Result in continued employment in the training-related occupation, in a job that offers adequate compensation, stability, and possibility for advancement.

- Quality of Training. Because the OJT is to provide training, the training should:
  - -- Have clear training objectives related to the skills that the participant needs to acquire,
  - -- Be provided in a logical sequence and in a way that is matched to the participant's level of skills and knowledge,
  - -- Be provided by an expert who can demonstrate the job tasks and work with the participant as he or she learns the skills.
  - -- Provide the participant skills that are transferable to similar jobs with other employers.

- Increase Participants' Access to Training. Because the OJT subsidy is to compensate employers for increased training costs,
  - -- The subsidy amount should be related to the extent of additional training and/or the risks that the participant might not work out.
  - -- The training subsidy should increase the participant's access to training-related occupation.

Below we assess the sample of current and completed OJT contracts according to these criteria.

We begin by examining how well matched the OJT jobs were to the participants' needs and interests and then explore the quality of the training provided. We next examine whether OJT contracts increased participants' access to training. We then examine the outcomes that resulted from the sample of completed OJT contracts. Throughout, we examine whether the quality of OJT contracts is related to SDA or provider practices or to participant characteristics.

Quality of Match

We assess the quality of match between the participant's needs and the OJT job on four separate dimensions: whether the job is matched to the participant's occupational interests; whether the working conditions are appropriate for the participant's needs; whether the wage rate is appropriate to the participant's needs and previous experience, given the local labor market conditions; and whether the job provides training in skills the participant needs to upgrade.

Match to Occupational Goals. We assessed whether the OJT contract was well matched to participants' occupational goals and interests by reviewing their employment histories and discussing with the participants their satisfaction with the jobs they received.

Overall, OJT contracts tended to be quite well matched to occupational interests. We judged about half to be good matches to the participant's interests and another third to be fair matches. An example of a good match is a middle-aged woman with 13 years of experience as a retail clerk who was trained as a cashier/photofinisher. She was delighted with her new position, which built on her previous skills but opened up a new occupational field for her. Another example is a young man with limited work experience who was trained as a press operator in a multi-task print shop. He was very satisfied with this job, which built on his mechanical aptitude.

As indicated in Chapter II, most SDAs did little to formally assess OJT participants' occupational interests. Because there was very little new information available to either the SDA or to the individual about feasible occupations, a common way to match clients to occupations was to write contracts for occupations in which the participant had worked previously. Indeed, one SDA established a policy of writing OJT contracts only for jobs in which the client had previous work experience.

Although this practice often resulted in a reasonable match to the client's occupational interests, it sometimes resulted in contracts that were not well matched to skills that the participant needed to upgrade. For example, a 41-year-old man with 14 years of experience as a cook was given an OJT contract as a cook for 200 hours. Clearly he was interested in the occupation, but he felt that he learned nothing new. We found this pattern of good occupational match at the expense of a poor match to skills needing to be upgraded in approximately 15% of the contracts that we examined.

Only 10% of the contracts that we sampled were poor matches to the client's occupational interests. An example is a young dropout and ex-offender who wanted to get his GED and learn carpentry and whose skills inventory included many relevant skills. He was "trained" in a retail store where he had previously worked.

Match to participants' required working conditions. Generally the OJT jobs were quite well matched to the participants' required working conditions. Most participants did not have specific requirements, but those who did were often accommodated. For example, a woman who was very shy and did not want to interact with the public was trained as an interline clerk in a travel agency where she could work in the back room processing travel billings. She was very satisfied with that arrangement.

However, about 10% of the clients were very poorly matched to the working conditions of their jobs. For example, an individual who was emotionally disturbed was originally placed as a mechanic's helper in a car rental agency. After one day on the job, the owner became concerned it was too dangerous for him to work at that job so the contract was rewritten for him to work at the front desk renting cars to customers. He was subsequently fired because he could not handle working with the public. Another example is a single mother who was trained in a job that required her to work at night, which was not appropriate because she had young children.

The contracts that were poorly matched to working conditions were all unsuccessful in that the participant either was planning to quit or had quit. More care in exploring the working conditions and making the conditions clear to the participant would likely increase the retention rate in OJT jobs.

Matched to financial needs. It was difficult to assess with precision whether a particular job was appropriate financially, but we did compare the OJT wage to the participant's previous wage and examined whether the job was likely to lead to financial independence for those on welfare. We judged approximately one-quarter of the contracts to be good matches on this dimension. Examples of good matches financially include a 37-year-old woman with seven children who was trained as an administrative assistant in a small college at $7.00 per hour and a 42-year-old ex-offender who was trained as a machinist apprentice for $7.50 an hour and was given a raise to $8.75 after the OJT contract ended.

Approximately 15% of the contracts were very poorly matched to participants' financial needs. In two cases the participants quit their OJT positions and found non-training related positions on their own that paid wages substantially higher than their OJT wages. Other examples of poor matches to financial needs include a 25-year-old high school graduate with four children who was trained as a cook for $4.25 and whose wage was lowered to $4.00 after the OJT contract ended and an AFDC recipient who was trained as a nurse's aide at $3.35 per hour.

Another important dimension to the match to financial needs is whether the job provided fringe benefits, particularly medical benefits. Approximately half of the current OJT participants were receiving medical insurance coverage from their job. Welfare recipients were somewhat more likely to receive fringe benefits than other participants (55% compared to 45%).

In some cases the lack of medical benefits was a substantial problem for the participant. For example, a 32-year-old women who had been receiving AFDC for several years had obtained classroom training as

a dental assistant followed by a 6 month OJT contract in a dentist's office. She was actively looking for another job in a clerical position, however, because she found that dental assistant positions in her community did not usually include medical benefits, which she needed for her children if she was to get off welfare. In this case, the JTPA resources spent in training this participant in both classroom training and OJT may be wasted because of a poor match between the participant's need for health benefits and the availability of benefits in the training occupation.

Match to Skills Participant Needs to Upgrade. The final dimension to the quality of match is whether the OJT job provided training in skills that the participant needed to acquire. About one-third of the OJT contracts were good matches to the skills the participant needed to upgrade and another third were fair matches. An example of a good match is a 50-year-old woman who had several years of office experience but did not have any experience with computers. She was trained as a telecommunications clerk, where she learned computerized accounting systems and had taken on substantially greater responsibility than on her previous jobs. The OJT contract thus built on her existing skills but upgraded them to include computer-related skills.

One third of the OJT jobs, however, were poorly matched to the skills that the participant needed to acquire. This judgment was made for several reasons. As we discuss in greater detail below, some of the jobs provided no real skill training and thus did nothing to overcome participants' skill deficits. In other cases, the participant already had the skills that were required to perform the job so that again the OJT contract did noting to upgrade these participants' skills. As indicated above, one implication of writing contracts in occupations in which the client had previous experience is that the job often did not provide any training in new skills.

Several participants had been unsuccessful in the labor market, not because they lacked occupational skills, but because they lacked world-of-work skills. For example, they may have had poor attendance habits or

quit at the first conflict on the job. In some of these cases, the OJT contract were designed to provide participants with additional occupational skills but were not designed to address participants' lack of world-of-work skills, their real barrier to employment.

In several cases the lack of world-of-work skills was evident in the case files. For example, one individual who received classroom training in building maintenance skills was unable to find a job after 90 days of job search. The record indicated that he had been given many referrals but he often did not show up for an interview or turned down the job. At the end of the 90-day period, the SDA wrote an OJT contract for the participant. His employer said he had excellent occupational skills and indeed was helping to train other new staff members. However, he was fired before the end of the training period because he was rude to tenants and other staff. Clearly the OJT contract did little to upgrade the world-of-work skills that this participant needed to acquire.

Summary of Quality of Match. Overall 15% of the sample of OJT contracts were high quality matches on all four dimensions and an additional 15% were well matched on three dimensions. We consider this 30% of the sample of OJT jobs to be good matches to the participant's needs and interests.

One example of a job that was matched on all dimensions is an individual who applied to the SDA in a very disheveled condition, poorly dressed, with broken glasses and substantial hygiene problems. He had only a third grade reading ability, limited work experience in low-skilled jobs and had been unemployed and on welfare for nearly three years. In exploring his interests, the counselor found out that he liked to work with animals. The counselor developed an OJT position for him as an animal attendant at the local animal shelter. The SDA paid for new glasses and helped solve some of his appearance problems before referring him to the job. The placement was for $6.75 per hour with benefits, a 50% subsidy for 10 weeks. The participant was working in an occupation he really liked, learning skills at his own pace, in

surroundings that were appropriate to his needs and earning a wage substantially higher than any of his previous jobs.

None of the OJT contracts were poorly matched on all four dimensions although 15% were poorly matched on more than one dimension. An example of an OJT contract that was poorly matched on several dimensions is a 32-year-old black man who was handicapped and a dropout. This individual was placed in an OJT position as a "palletizer," where he unloaded products from a conveyer belt to a pallet for shipping. This job paid $4.50 per hour with no benefits and no room for advancement. He quit after his OJT contract and found a job as a kitchen helper which paid $6.50 per hour plus benefits. He is still looking on his own for a position to develop some type of occupational skills with career potential.

Relationship of Quality of Match to OJT Practices. Several SDA and provider practices were related to the quality of the match between the OJT job and the participant's needs and interest. SDAs that provide OJT services directly had more high quality matches than SDAs that contract OJT services to providers. Overall, 40% of the contracts developed by SDAs directly were well matched on at least three dimensions compared to only 25% of those contracts developed by a service provider. In particular, providers were substantially less likely to match participants to jobs that provided upgrading of needed skills.

The source of match (that is, whether SDA-initiated, client-initiated or employer-initiated match) was not related to the quality of match to working conditions or financial need. However, half of the SDA-initiated matches were good occupational matches compared to only one-third of the employer-initiated matches. This points out that JTPA clients can benefit from receiving assistance in locating jobs that suit their interests. Further, approximately 40% of the SDA-initiated matches were well matched to needed skills while only 30% of the employer-initiated matches were well matched on that dimension.

Only five of the 14 SDAs in our sample assessed OJT participants' occupational interests and abilities, but the quality of match in these SDAs was substantially higher than in SDAs that did not assess occupational interests. Approximately 70% of OJT contracts in SDAs that assessed OJT applicants were well matched to occupational interest and over 60% of the contracts in these SDAs were well matched on at least three dimensions. In contrast, only 45% of the contracts in SDAs without assessment were well matched to occupational interests and only 20% were well matched on at least three dimensions. Thus greater assessment of occupational interests and abilities would likely improve the quality of match between the OJT job and the participants' needs and interests.

The SDA's view of OJT was also related to the quality of match. In SDAs that view OJT payments as "bribes" to hire the disadvantaged, only 15% of the OJT contracts were well matched on at least three dimensions. In SDAs that view OJT as providing training, but not necessarily increasing the participants' access to training, approximately 35% of the contracts were well matched on at least three dimensions. In SDAs that view OJT payments as compensation for providing training to individuals whom the employer would not ordinarily hire, 55% of the contracts were well matched on at least three dimensions. Thus the SDA's view of the purpose of OJT training did have a substantial relationship to the quality of match.

These relationships between SDA practices and the quality of match are not due to differences in the economic conditions across SDAs. The number of quality matches was not related to the unemployment rate in the SDA. High quality matches were just as frequent in areas with loose labor markets as in areas with tight labor markets.

Relationship of Quality of Match to Participant Characteristics. We examined the proportion of participants with various characteristics who were judged to be well matched to their OJT placements. Welfare recipients, dropouts, and those with limited work histories were just as well matched to occupational interests, needed skills or other

dimensions as other participants. Thus there is no evidence that the more hard-to-serve clients are being trained in less appropriate jobs.

In addition to the subjective judgments about the quality of match, we also examined the relationship between participants' characteristics and characteristics of their OJT jobs, including occupation and SVP level. Figure IV-4 presents the training occupations by participant characteristics.

Half of the OJT contracts for women were in clerical or sales occupations. Although these positions were not necessarily inappropriate, the frequency of match to traditionally female occupations may reflect the lack of exploration of alternatives. Those with limited work histories were also more likely to receive training in clerical or sales jobs, but this relationship occurs in part because more women than men had limited work histories. Dropouts were less likely to receive training in clerical and sales occupations and somewhat more likely to receive training in structural occupations.

Figure IV-5 presents the SVP level of the training jobs by client characteristics. The SVP skill level does not vary much across participant characteristics. Specifically, we find no evidence that the most disadvantaged are being trained in less skilled occupations than are other participants.[3]

In summary, although we found a substantial number of OJT contracts that were not well matched to the participant's needs, we did not find any evidence that the quality of the match, measured either by our subjective evaluation or by more objective characteristics of the job, differed by participant characteristics.

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[3]We also found no strong relationships between the General Educational Development reasoning level of the OJT jobs and participants' characteristics.

Figure IV-4

Percent of Various Types of Participants
Receiving OJT Training in Various Occupations

DOT	Overall	Welfare Recipient	Limited Work History	Dropout	Female	Minority
Professional, Technical, Managerial	6%	10%	7%	0%	9%	9%
Clerical, sales	32	26	41	13	50	17
Service	10	21	11	13	10	15
Agriculture and fishing	4	5	4	18	2	3
Processing	2	0	2	6	2	6
Machine trades	15	16	11	19	7	15
Benchwork	10	0	13	6	10	12
Structural	10	22	4	19	0	15
Miscellaneous	11	0	7	6	10	8
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
n =	92	19	46	16	42	34

Figure IV-5

Percent of Various Types of Participants Receiving Training in Jobs with Various SVP Levels

SVP Level	Overall	Welfare Recipient	Limited Work History	Dropout	Female	Minority
< 30 days	14%	16%	15%	7%	19%	12%
30 days - 3 mos.	15	0	22	13	12	18
3 - 6 mos.	23	26	20	40	24	21
6 mo. - 1 year	7	5	9	0	15	0
1 - 2 years	15	21	13	7	20	18
2 - 4 years	25	32	21	33	10	28
4 - 10 years	1	0	0	0	0	3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
n =	92	19	46	16	42	34

Quality of Training in OJT Jobs

The quality of training provided through OJT contracts varied substantially. Not surprisingly, the quality depended greatly on the characteristics of the employer and the work situation. Nonetheless, we found some important patterns in the quality of OJT training and clear differences among SDAs in the quality of OJT services.

It would be unrealistic to impose the same standards of curriculum design on OJT contracts as on classroom training. Nevertheless, the same general principles apply: the training should have clear objectives, the training should follow a logical order and be matched to the learner's level, and the training should be in job-relevant skills that are transferable to similar jobs with other employers.

Objectives of training. The OJT contract generally describes either skills or job functions. We reviewed this description with both the employer and participant. Often there were was considerable deviation from the contract both in what the employer expected and in what the client was learning.

Two-thirds of the contracts that we reviewed described the job that the participant was to perform. These descriptions, which are often simply photocopied from the Dictionary of Occupational Titles, generally were not taken very seriously by either the SDA or the employer. In fact, we found one contract with a description of the wrong job attached, a contract that was signed by the SDA, the employer and the employee.

The problem with using the description of job functions is that it does not focus either the participant or the employer on what skills are to be learned to perform that job. Thus the OJT contract for a receptionist at an insurance agency specified that the person was to receive callers at the establishment and answer the telephone. The real skills she was to learn included obtaining appropriate information to fill out insurance forms, learning the company computer system, issuing

binders for auto insurance, and writing initial drafts of auto insurance policies.

The remaining third of the contracts described the skills that the participant was to learn. Most commonly, the SDA and employer negotiate the training goals and attach approximate hours to each of the skills. Although the employers varied in how carefully these skill descriptions were followed, this approach did help focus attention on the fact that OJT is intended to provide training in skills rather than simply employment. None of the SDAs in our sample had taken the process one step further to first assess the skills in which the participant was deficient at enrollment and then tailor the contract to those skills, but the feasibility of this competency-based approach to OJT was being investigated in at least two SDAs.

In approximately 15% of the OJT jobs that we examined, the actual training curriculum was very structured, with a more formal curriculum than described in the OJT contract. For example, a young man who was receiving AFDC was trained as a heating and air conditioning mechanic. The curriculum, which the employer had developed himself, included weekly training objectives that the participant was to accomplish via working directly with a supervisor, via classroom instruction provided by the employer after hours, and via reading texts and completing assignments.

Sequence. In approximately 15% of the jobs in our sample, there was only a single task to be learned. Among the jobs with multiple tasks, we found considerable diversity in whether the tasks were presented in a logical sequence. A common mode was simply to start the participant on what was needed to be done at the worksite at the time. Often the expectations for performance were set lower for the new employee, but little attention was given to whether it would be more logical to start the person on other tasks first or whether the participant had all the skills required to complete the task well. Sequence based on the employer's needs occurred in about one-third of the contracts.

The other common strategy was to start the client on the easiest tasks first and then to move them on to more difficult tasks. For example, an electronic assembler began her training with a small board to practice assembly and soldering techniques. Next she moved to a more complicated board with a schematic diagram to follow. She then moved to a more complex board that required hand soldering of delicate circuits. This sequence was specified in the OJT contract. A sequence based on the difficulty of the tasks was found in approximately half the contracts in our sample.

Match to Learner's Level. One potential advantage to OJT is that, because there is typically only one participant being trained, it is easier to tailor the pace and content of training to the individual's existing skills and abilities. Most OJT positions did seem to provide training at a level moderately appropriate for the participant. The 15% of the positions that were rated poor on this dimension were all aimed too low for the participant's skill level.

One employer in our sample was extraordinarily sensitive to this issue and had developed the following training principles for his staff:

- Be aware of terminology that you take for granted.
- Teach the trainee how to ask questions.
- Be constantly aware of the picture that is being painted in the trainee's mind through your instruction.
- Whenever possible, give feedback before the action is taken. That is, ask the trainees how they will do it before they begin.
- Be sensitive about retention. The training has got to build, like learning a language.

- Be aware that people will be fast and slow in different skill areas. Challenge the trainees but do not swamp them.

This employer's principles could profitably be shared with other employers to increase the quality of OJT training.

Methods of training. One model that can be used for OJT training is an apprenticeship model, described by Collins, Brown and Newman (1986). This model distinguishes three separate activities. The first step is expert demonstration where the supervisor or experienced employee demonstrates to the trainee how the tasks are to be performed. The second step is supported practice, where the expert either works with the trainee or watches the trainee practice the task. The third step is independent work, where the trainee works alone, often at a slower than average pace and with the supervisor checking the finished product, until the trainee is working at the speed and quality of an average employee.

From our discussions with participants and employers we obtained descriptions of how training was provided, which we classified along these dimensions. We found that the extent of expert demonstration and the extent of supported practice were highly correlated so we discuss these two dimensions together. We refer to these methods as interactive training.

In approximately 10% of the current contracts, there was no expert demonstration or supported practice at all. In some cases no one at the worksite knew how to perform the task. For example, a welfare recipient was being trained as an insurance clerk in an agency where the agents themselves were in training. As a result, no expert was available teach her the computer system, which she had to learn on her own and, in fact, understood better than her employers. In other cases expert demonstration was simply not provided, even though experts were available. For example, a young woman who may have been learning disabled was trained as a child care worker. The other staff did not

have time either to teach her what to do or to give her feedback. She basically learned by observing. Although the participants in these cases often acquired skills, the process is more accurately described as on-the-job learning rather than on-the-job training.

In one-third of the cases employers provided only a small amount of interactive training, in terms of expert demonstration and supported practice. The remainder of the time was spent in independent work. For example, a young high school graduate was given a 16 week OJT contract in a die casting shop where she operated a stamping machine that assembled window sash locks. She was shown how to do the task and then her work was more frequently checked for two or three days. After that time, she worked independently. After 6 weeks she was making the daily quota of experienced workers, with 10 weeks of subsidy remaining. Another example is a young dropout with previous experience in oyster shucking who was trained as a fish cleaner in a 15-week OJT position. She was given a brief demonstration of how to work each machine and then worked independently for the remainder of the contract. All the fish cleaners in this plant were hired through OJT contracts.

In another third of the cases, there was a moderate amount of interactive training. For example, a 19-year-old woman was trained as an order clerk for 1040 hours. The supervisor worked closely with the trainee, giving work assignments and advising the participant about appropriate work behavior. After the first few weeks, the participant worked more independently using the computerized ordering system and asked the supervisor only about how to handle new manufactures.

In the remaining 25% of our sample, we found a substantial amount of training, either in terms of demonstration and supported practice or a more structured approach with a greater mix of methods. An example of substantial training in an unstructured environment is a 26-year-old black veteran who was trained as a machine operator for 480 hours. This trainee received daily one-on-one instruction from the expert who installed the die in the hydraulic cold press at the beginning of each day. This expert worked with the trainee until he mastered the task. The

training provided to this participant will continue well beyond the OJT period, and he will be eligible for further training in a more advanced position after 6 months.

Examples of substantial training in a more structured training environment include the heating and air conditioning position discussed above and a 24-year-old man receiving AFDC who was trained as an office machine repairman for 480 hours. In this latter position, the employer also developed a complete syllabus and detailed curriculum that included training in several types of machine repair, general trouble-shooting techniques, procedures for specific manufactures, and customer relations. The training included video taped instruction and home study as well as on-the-job instruction. The training in both of these examples will continue well beyond the OJT period.

These more structured programs were among the outstanding examples of quality training. The employers providing structured training often made use of training materials developed by outside sources. For example, the heating and air conditioning textbook was supplied by the trade association, and the photocopy repair training materials were developed in part by the manufactures of various products. Employers may not be aware of all these sources of training support. For commonly trained occupation, the SDA may help increase the quality of training by investigating these sources of training materials.

Transferability of Skills. An important dimension to the quality of training is whether the participant learned skills that could be used in other contexts or whether the skills learned were specific only to that particular employer. The distinction between job-specific and general skills is important because the case for a subsidy is substantially stronger if the individual can transfer the skills to other jobs. If the participant learns only job-specific skills, then the OJT has done little to increase the participant's general employability. Further, the employer would have to provide training in job specific skills to any new hire.

In 30% of the cases we judged that the participant was learning few or no transferable skills. For example, a young woman recently discharged from the Air Force was trained as a packing attendant in a food processing plant through a 1040 hour OJT. She learned how to pack potato chips, seal the boxes, stack the cases and palletize the cases. She learned how to work in a mass production plant, but this experienced worker acquired few skills that could be transferred to other jobs.

In 25% of the cases the transferability of skills was judged to be moderate. For example a young man still in high school was trained as a pin-rack inspector in a textile plant. He used an automated storage and retrieval system to obtain the tubes that hold threads for weaving. He then inspected the tubes for wear and made necessary repairs, then entered the data into the computer so the tubes were properly stored. He was learning basic computer entry procedures. In this example, the trainee lacked work experience so the world-of-work skills he was acquiring were valuable and transferable.

In 45% of the cases the transferability of skills was high. An example is a recent high school graduate who was trained as a graphics technician. He learned several types of skills, including making camera-ready layouts, darkroom and metal photo processing, and some silk screening. The equipment he was using was about in the middle range of technological sophistication. This participant was learning skills that could be used in several other occupations as well as in other jobs in a similar field.

Summary of Training Quality. To summarize the quality of training, we present the relationship between whether the participant was learning transferable skills and whether interactive training was provided:

Transferability of Skills Learned in OJT Jobs by Amount of Interactive Training

Amount of Expert Demonstration and Support Practice	Amount of Transferable Skills: None or Low	Amount of Transferable Skills: Moderate or High
Low	30%	25%
Moderate or High	0	45

Clearly, whether the participant received interactive training is correlated with whether he or she acquired transferable skills. All of the participants who worked in jobs that provided a moderate or high degree of interactive training were acquiring either a high or moderate degree of transferable skills.

Based on the combination of interactive training and the attainment of transferable skills, we define three categories of training quality:

- Approximately 30% of OJT contracts were for jobs where the participant received little interactive training, learning few if any transferable skills. We judged that these contracts offered poor quality training on these dimensions.

- Approximately 25% of the OJT contracts were for jobs where the participant received little interactive training but acquired a moderate to high degree of transferable skills. In these cases, the quality of training was not good, but the participant was learning skills.

- The remaining 45% of OJT contracts were for jobs with moderate or high amount of interactive training where the participant was learning a moderate or high amount of

transferable skills. These contracts were judged to provide high quality training and substantial skills.

This summary measure of training quality is related to two other dimensions of training quality. OJT contracts that specify the skills to be learned rather than simply describe the job resulted in substantially higher training quality: 70% of the contracts that specified skills to be learned were of high quality compared to only 30% of the contracts that specified only the job to be performed. Similarly, 70% of the OJT jobs where the training sequence was based on the difficulty of tasks were high quality training compared to 15% of the jobs where the sequence was based on the needs of the employer. Thus jobs that provide quality training on one dimension are also likely to provide quality training on other dimensions.

There is also a strong relationship between the quality of match and the quality of training. Of the contracts rated as good matches to participants' needs, only 5% provided poor quality training and nearly two-thirds provided high quality training.

Relationship of Quality of Training to OJT Practices. Whether the SDA provided OJT services directly or contracted the services with a provider was not related to the quality of training. Further, we found only a small relationship between the quality of training and the source of the match: approximately one-third of the employer-initiated reverse referrals were judged to be of poor quality compared to one-quarter of the SDA-initiated matches.

However, SDAs or providers that monitor OJT contracts during the training period provided substantially higher quality training. In these SDAs 60% of the contracts provided high quality training and only 20% of the contracts provided poor quality training. In contrast, in SDAs that did not monitor OJT contracts, only 10% of the contracts provided high quality training and over 50% of the contracts provided poor quality training.

The need for monitoring of OJT contracts was stated very well by a participant who was to be trained as a lathe operator but had not received training in any new skills. "This is a good program, but it needs to be regulated better. They should make sure the companies getting the contracts are actually training the people."

The quality of training is also associated with the SDA's view of the purpose of OJT. In SDAs that viewed OJT payments as bribes to employers, over 50% of the OJT contracts provided poor quality training. In contrast, to only 20% of the contracts were judged to provide poor quality training in those SDAs that either viewed OJT as simply providing training or viewed the payments as compensation for additional training.

Relationship of Quality of Training and Participant Characteristics. Importantly, we did not find any clear relationships between the quality of the training and the characteristics of the participant, including sex, welfare recipiency, or limited work history. Thus there is no evidence that harder-to-serve participants are receiving poorer quality OJT training than other participants.

Whether OJT Increased Participants' Access to Training

The final set of criteria for the quality of OJT training relate to whether the OJT subsidy appropriately compensates the employer for additional training costs of hiring a JTPA participant.

Recent changes in the JTPA regulations require that the duration of OJT not exceed 6 months and be based on some measure of the extent of training such as the SVP level. Figure IV-6, which presents the length of the OJT contract by SVP level, indicates only a modest relationship between the duration of the contract and the length of time required to learn the job. Nevertheless, 80% of the contracts were for durations less than the SVP specified length of training. Among those contracts that were written for longer durations than the SVP level, two-thirds

Figure IV-6

Relationship Between SVP Level of Jobs and Duration of Training

	SVP Level				
OJT Duration	<30 days(2)	30-90 days(3)	3-6 mos(4)	6 mos-2 yrs(5-6)	>2 yrs(7-8)
4 weeks	7.7%	--	4.8%	10.0%	12.5%
4-12 weeks	30.8	64.3	61.9	45.0	41.7
13-26 weeks	53.9	28.6	28.6	45.0	37.5
>26 weeks	7.7	7.1	4.8	--	8.3
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
n =	13	14	21	20	24

were for occupations such as custodial worker or general clerk with SVP levels of 30 days or less.[4]

If the OJT payments are compensation to employers for increased training costs from hiring someone whom they would not ordinarily hire, we would expect the duration of OJT compensation to be longer for less employable participants. SDAs did tend to write longer contracts for dropouts than high school graduates: 62% of the contracts for dropouts were for 13 weeks or more compared to 36% of the contracts for graduates. However, for both welfare recipients and those with limited work histories the opposite is the case: SDAs tended to write somewhat shorter contracts for these hard-to-serve groups than for other participants.

We also found that contracts that were judged a good match to client needs and those that provided high quality training were not any longer in duration than contracts that were poorly matched or that provided poor quality training. Thus there is no relationship between the length of OJT training and the quality of OJT training.

The length of the OJT subsidy, therefore, bears little relationship to characteristics of participants or jobs that are expected to affect the amount of additional training costs that employers incur from hiring JTPA participants.

Access to Training. Based on our discussions with clients and employers and on our review of the case records, we tried to assess whether the OJT subsidy increased the participant's access to training or whether the individual was likely to find a similar job on his or her own without the subsidy.

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[4]We also examined whether the length of the OJT contract was related to the General Educational Development reasoning level of the training occupation. If anything, contracts for jobs requiring higher level reasoning were somewhat shorter than those requiring lower level reasoning.

In 30% of the cases we did not see any evidence that the OJT subsidy appreciably influenced participants' opportunities. In these cases, it is very likely that employers were paid for hiring and training an individual that they would have hired and trained anyway. Clearly this is a subjective judgment, but we judged contracts to have no effect on the participant's access to occupation for three reason. Because of the importance of this finding, we list some examples for each reason.

First, 40% of the cases that did not affect participants' access were reverse referrals where the employer told us explicitly that the subsidy made no difference in his or her decision to hire the individual. For example, a young, bright, and highly motivated high school graduate with previous experience in a fast-food pizza restaurant was hired by a fast-food taco restaurant but was sent first to the OJT provider for an OJT training subsidy. If the participant had not been eligible for JTPA, the employer would have hired him anyway.

Second, in 35% of the cases that did not affect access, the participant already had substantial experience in the training occupation and nothing had changed to make him or her less employable. For example, a middle-aged man with 17 years experience as a carpenter was "trained" to cut lumber into pieces for prefabricated gazebos. The employer indicated that the participant was very skilled at entry.

Third, in the remaining cases that did not affect access, the job involved minimal training and the participant had qualifications similar to other employees. For example, a young man was trained to buff floors for a large hotel, a task that he learned in one day. The other workers whom this employer had hired without a subsidy were less skilled than this participant.

In 45% of the total OJT sample, the OJT subsidy had a relatively small effect on the participant's access to the training occupation. One example indicates the difference between a job that offers training and one increases the participant's access to training. A young woman was

trained as a lens grinder, a job that involved substantial training during the OJT period and that could lead to other opportunities with even more training. However, the participant was a recent high school graduate who had completed an advanced curriculum in science and math for gifted students. The employer described her as brilliant and above average in terms of skill level at entry. The OJT subsidy may have increased the employer's willingness to hire the participant directly out of school, but it is likely that this talented young woman would have found a job with training potential without an 11-month training subsidy.

In only 25% of the OJT cases was there evidence that the subsidy had substantially increased participants' access to training. Examples include a young, mentally retarded man with limited work experience who was trained as a salesperson in a discount store. The training subsidy was instrumental in the employer's willingness to take the risk of hiring this individual.

Another example is a 37-year old welfare recipient who was trained as an administrative assistant. The employer indicated that the training subsidy was critical in his decision to hire this participant; otherwise he would have hired someone with more experience.

There is no evidence that contracts that provided greater participant access to training were longer term contracts. The opposite was the case: OJT positions that had no effect on access averaged 15 weeks, while those that substantially increased access averaged 12 weeks in length.

Relationship of Increased Access to OJT Practices. There is a small relationship between whether the SDA provides OJT services directly and whether the contracts increased participants' access to the occupation: 30% of the contracts developed by the SDA directly substantially increased the participants' access to that occupation, compared to 20% of the contracts developed by a contractor.

As indicated above, there is a strong relationship between the source of match and the extent of increased access: nearly half of the employer-initiated reverse referrals had no effect on the participants' access compared with only 20% of the SDA-initiated matches.

SDAs' assessment practices also influenced whether OJT contracts increased participants' access to training. In SDAs that did not assess participants' occupational interests or abilities, only 20% of the OJT contracts were judged to increase substantially participants' access to training, but in SDAs that did such assessment, 40% of the contracts substantially increased participants' access to training.

SDAs that monitor OJT contracts tend to have more contracts that increase participants' access to training. Nearly half of the contracts in SDAs that do not monitor contracts had no effect on participants' access to training while only 20% of the contracts in SDAs that did monitor training had no effect on access.

The SDA's view of the purpose of OJT is also strongly related to whether OJT contracts increased participants' access to training. In SDAs that viewed OJT payments as bribes to employers for hiring the disadvantaged, only 10% of the contracts were judged to substantially increase participants' access to training. In contrast, 30% of the OJT contracts increased access in SDAs that viewed OJT as providing training and 40% increased access in SDAs that viewed OJT payments as compensation to employers for hiring workers that they might not ordinarily hire.

Although we found that few OJT contracts substantially increased participants' access to training, practices such as assessment and SDA-initiated matches can improve this aspect of OJT quality. Further, efforts to increase the quality of training will also likely increase the number of contracts that increased participants' access to training. Approximately 45% of the high quality OJT contracts substantially increased participants' access to training compared to less than 10% of poor training quality contracts.

Relationship to Client Characteristics. Once again we found no strong relationship between this dimension of OJT quality and client characteristics. Welfare recipients, dropouts, women and those with limited work histories were as likely as other participants to received OJT contracts that increased their access to training.

OUTCOMES OF OJT

We were able to follow-up on 55 OJT participants approximately 6 months after the end of their OJT contracts. Of course we not not have the detailed information about the the content of the training for these former participants, but in some cases we were able to draw conclusions about some aspects of training quality.

Among those whom we could contact, 65% of the former participants were employed at the time of contact. Of those, 80% were in training-related jobs and 75% were still with their OJT employer. Thus overall, only half of the OJT participants were still working for their OJT employer 6 to 9 months after the end of training.

For the 31 former participants who were employed, we compared their training wage rate to their current wage. One former participant who was still employed with his OJT employer was actually earning less than his training wage rate. Three other former participants were still earning their initial wage rate. The rest, however, were earning more than the OJT wage rate: about half had received raises of $.50 per hour or more. Thus most of those who were employed had received pay increases.

As discussed above, approximately half of the current participants were receiving medical benefits during the OJT period. Among former participants who were employed, nearly two-thirds were receiving benefits. In part, this difference reflects the fact that many employers have a probation period before employees qualify for benefits; in part, this may also reflect that participants who receive benefits are more likely to remain with their employers.

We also asked participants about the stability of their employment and about their possibilities for advancement with their current employers. Approximately 40% of employed former participants rated the stability of employment as good and another 40% rated their stability as fair. Only 20% rated their possibility for advancement as good although approximately half rated their possibility of advancement as fair.

Former participants were also asked about their experiences with the OJT program. Only 20% expressed substantial dissatisfaction with the program. We also asked the employers about their experiences with the OJT program. Only 9% of the employers expressed dissatisfaction. Two thirds of the employers were very satisfied. Commonly they mentioned that they not only appreciated the subsidy but also thought that the SDA had done a good job of recruiting and screening applications for their positions.

We examined the relationship between other dimensions of OJT quality and whether the participant was still employed with the OJT employer. For most former participants we were able to assess the quality of match between the OJT job and their needs, although the outcome of the contract probably influenced our assessment to some extent. Nevertheless, over 80% of those judged to be well matched on at least three dimensions were still employed with their OJT employer, compared to 40% of those less well matched.

We were not able to adequately judge the quality of training provided to former participants, but we could determine whether the contract specified skills to be learned. Over 70% of the former participants whose training contracts specified skills to be learned were still employed with their OJT employer compared to 40% of the former participants whose contracts merely described the job to be performed.

For 45 former participants, we could make some assessment of whether the OJT subsidy increased their access to their OJT occupation. Among those where the subsidy substantially increased their access, 80%

were still employed with their OJT employer compared with 45% of those where the subsidy made only a small difference in their access.

Relationship of Outcomes and OJT Practices. Participants whose contracts were developed by providers were somewhat more likely to be employed with their OJT employer at the time of contact than those whose contracts were developed directly by the SDA. We did not find that the source of match, assessment or monitoring procedures were substantially related to post program outcomes.

The SDA's view of the purpose of OJT is associated with outcomes. Approximately 85% of the former participants from SDAs that viewed OJT as compensation for additional training costs were still employed with their OJT employer compared to 45% of participants in other SDAs.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter we have evaluated the JTPA OJT program using criteria derived from the purposes of OJT training. In this section we summarize the results according to these criteria and then present recommendations for procedures to improve the quality of OJT services.

Quality of Job Match. Because OJT employment is expected to continue, the first criteria were whether the job was well matched to the participant's occupational interests, required working conditions, and financial needs and provided training in skills the participant needed to upgrade. Further, we examined whether employment did continue for former participants.

- Match to occupational interests. Approximately 50% of OJT jobs were good matches to clients' occupational interests and another 30% were fair matches. However, some contracts were written for occupations in which the participant had worked previously, thus not providing upgrading in needed skills.

- Match to working conditions. Most OJT jobs were fairly well matched to participants' required working conditions, although we found some important mismatches, particularly for single women with children and for some individuals with emotional problems or other handicaps.

- Match to financial needs. Most contracts were also fairly well matched to financial needs although some welfare recipients are clearly being trained in jobs that cannot lead to independence, because of either low wage rates or the lack of medical benefits.

- Match to needed skills. OJT contracts were least well matched to the skills that the participant needed to upgrade. One-third of the contracts were poorly matched on this dimension because there were very few skills required to perform the job, because the participant had already acquired the skills through previous experience in the occupation or because the real skills the participant needed to acquire were world-of-work skills, such as getting along with supervisors, working in teams, or handling customers.

- Whether employment continued after the OJT contract. Although we cannot gauge what would have happened in the absence of the programs, only 50% of our sample of former participants were still employed with their OJT employer 6 to 9 months after the contract ended. An additional 15% were working for different employers.

We found several SDA policies and practices that were related to the quality of match:

- SDAs that provide OJT services directly had more high quality matches than SDAs that contracted with an outside provider for OJT services.

- The process of match was related to the quality of match. Contracts that were employer-initiated reverse referrals were less well matched to occupational interests and needed skills than were matches initiated by the SDA.

- SDAs that assess OJT participants' occupational interests also had higher quality matches, on occupational interests as well as other dimensions.

- The SDA's view of the purpose of OJT had a strong association with the quality of match. In SDAs that viewed OJT payments as bribes to employers to hire the disadvantaged, only 15% of the contracts were well matched on at least three dimensions, compared to 35% in SDAs that viewed the purpose of OJTs as providing training and 50% in SDAs that viewed OJT as increasing the participant's access to training. Furthermore, 80% of the former participants in SDAs that viewed OJT as increasing the participant's access to training were still employed with their OJT employers.

The quality of match was not related to participant characteristics or to the unemployment rate in the local economy.

Quality of Training. Because the purpose of OJTs is to provide training, the second set of criteria related to the quality of training, including having clear training objectives related to the skills that the participant needs to acquire, providing training in a logical sequence, being well matched matched to the learner's level, and providing substantial training in skills transferable to similar jobs.

- Clarity of OJT objectives. In many cases the training objectives were unclear both to the participant and to the employer. Two-thirds of the contracts described the job to be performed; only a third clearly described what

the participant was expected to learn during the OJT contract.

- Logic of the sequence of training. In one third of the contracts the sequence was based on the needs of the employer. In the remaining contracts where there was more than one task to be learned, the sequence was based on the difficulty of the task. Overall the pace and content were fairly well matched to a level appropriate for the participant.

- Methods of training. In 10% of the cases there was no interactive training at all. In one third of the OJT contracts there was very little expert demonstration or supported practice and a high degree of independent work. In another third of the cases, there was a moderate amount of interactive training. In 20% of the OJT contracts there was a substantial amount of training, either in terms of demonstration and supported practice or a more structured approach with a greater mix of methods.

- Transferability of skills. In 30% of the cases, the participant was learning few if any transferable skills while in 25% of the cases they were learning a moderate amount of transferable skills. In contrast, 45% were learning a substantial amount of transferable skills.

To summarize the quality of training, we examined the relationship between the extent to which the participant was receiving interactive training and the extent to which the participant was learning transferable skills:

- 30% of OJT contracts were judged to be poor quality training, providing few skills. These OJT contracts were for jobs where the participant received very little

interactive training and learned few if any transferable skills.

- 25% of the OJT contracts provided relatively poor training but the participant was learning skills. These contracts were for jobs where the participant received little interactive training but was acquiring a moderate to high degree of transferable skills.

- 45% of OJT contracts were judged to provide quality training and substantial skills. These contracts were for jobs providing moderate to high amount of interactive training and moderate to high amount of transferable skills.

Several SDA practices were found to be related to the quality of training:

- SDAs or providers that monitor the progress of OJT contracts had substantially higher quality training. In these SDAs 60% of the contracts were high quality compared to 10% of the contracts in SDAs that did not monitor contracts.

- OJT contracts that specify the skills to be learned rather than describe the job resulted in substantially higher quality training: 70% of contracts specifying skills were high quality compared to 30% of those describing jobs.

- The SDA's view of the purpose of OJT was related to the quality of OJT training. Over 50% of the contracts in SDAs that viewed OJT as a "bribe" to hire the disadvantaged were poor quality.

Again, there was no relationship between the quality of training and participant characteristics.

Increase Participants' Access to Training. Because the purpose of OJT payments is to compensate employers for increased training costs, the third set of criteria include whether the OJT terms were related to the additional training costs that the employer incurred as a result of hiring the participant and whether the subsidy increased the participant's access to training.

- Length of training.

  -- Although relationship between the duration of OJT contracts and the SVP skill level is weak, very few OJT contracts are for longer than indicated by the SVP level.

  -- SDAs tended to write longer contracts for dropouts than for other participants, but if anything, the contracts for welfare recipients and those with limited work histories tended to be shorter than for other participants.

  -- The length of training is not related to either the quality of match or the quality of training provided by the contract.

- Increased access to training.

  -- In 30% of the cases there was no evidence that the OJT subsidy increased the participant's access to the occupation and skills for which they were trained; in 45% of the cases the OJT subsidy had a small effect on the participant's access; in only 25% of the cases did the OJT subsidy substantially increase the participant's access to training.

-- The average length of contracts that did not increase access at all was 15 weeks; the average length of contracts that substantially increased access was 12 weeks.

SDA practices were related to whether OJT contracts increased participants' access to training:

- Reverse referrals initiated by the employer were considerably less likely to result in increased access to training. Half of the reverse referral employers indicated that they would have hired the participant even if they had not gotten the subsidy.

- SDAs that assessed OJT participants' occupational skills and interests were more likely to write OJT contracts that increased the participant's access to training.

- SDAs that monitored OJT contracts had more contracts that increased participants' access to training.

- The SDA's view of the purpose of OJT training is related to the extent to which OJT contracts increase participant's access to training. In SDAs that view OJT payments as bribes, only 10% of the OJT contracts substantially increased participants' training opportunities; in SDAs that view OJT as providing training, 30% of the contracts substantially increased participants' training opportunities; in SDAs that view OJT payments as compensation to employers for providing training to individuals that they would not ordinarily hire, 40% of the contracts increased the participants' training opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The quality of OJT training in JTPA varies tremendously. In our sample of 93 OJT contracts, we found some outstanding examples of training that was well matched to the participant's needs and interests and provided high quality training in transferable skills for jobs that participants would not have gotten without the OJT subsidy. We also found examples of OJT contracts that can only be described as a waste of the participant's time and the taxpayer's money.

Several SDA policies and practices were related to the quality of OJT services. It is likely that if these practices were adopted by more SDAs, it would increase OJT quality. It is from these finding that we draw our recommendations.

1. Provide greater leadership at all levels in defining the purpose of OJT.

DOL and the states may increase the quality of OJT by clarifying the purpose of OJT services. DOL views the purpose of OJT as providing training, not just "buying" participants jobs. However, one third of the SDAs in our sample saw the purpose of OJT payments simply as an incentive to hire disadvantaged workers. The OJT contracts in those SDAs tended to be less well matched to participants' needs and interests, to provide lower quality training and to have less effect on participants' access to training.

SDA should also clarify the purpose of OJT contracts to their providers and to employers. There is some evidence that OJT providers are less likely than SDAs to match participants to OJT jobs that provide appropriate skills. Further, in our discussions with OJT employers, it was clear that many did not understand that the OJT subsidy was to compensate them for training the participant. SDAs may increase the quality of OJT services by communicating the purpose of OJT more clearly.

2. Assess OJT participants' occupational interest, abilities and experiences.

In SDAs that assessed OJT participants' occupational interests, OJT contracts were better matched to participants' needs and were more likely to increase participants' access to training. Without such assessment, many contracts were written for occupations in which the participant had previous experience and therefore learned very few new skills.

Many participants also lacked world-of-work skills. Their problem was not in finding jobs but in keeping them. Assessment could help diagnose these problems before the participant is placed in an inappropriate OJT position.

3. Do not encourage employer-initiated reverse referrals.

Reverse referrals do not necessarily provide lower quality training. However, it is clearly a waste of scarce JTPA resources to pay a subsidy to an employer to hire someone he or she would have hired anyway.

Although some reverse referrals are probably inevitable from employers who have used the OJT program in the past, three SDAs actively encouraged reverse referrals. These practices do not promote quality OJT contracts.

4. Specify the skills to be learned in the OJT contract.

Contracts that specify the skills that the participant is to learn help focus both the participant and the employer on the fact that the OJT contract is for training. We found that 70% of the contracts that specified skills the participant was to learn provided high quality training compared to 30% of those that merely described the job the participant was to perform.

5. Take a more active role in shaping the content of OJT training.

In many cases the quality of training was poor either because no one at the worksite was available to train the participant or because the participant spent most of the OJT period working independently with little or no interactive training. Greater care in determining whether the essential elements of quality training are in place could increase the quality of training. In particular, SDAs or providers should determine who will provide the training, how long the trainer will work with the participant, and how long the participant will work independently. Assistance in determining the skills to be learned and the methods of training was viewed as a valuable service by several employers in our sample.

6. Link the terms of OJT contracts to characteristics of participants and jobs.

Currently the length of OJT training has only a weak relationship to either characteristics of the participant or of the job and in sometimes inversely related to aspects of training quality. It is likely that JTPA resources would be used more effectively if the amount of the training subsidy were more closely related to the amount of training provided.

7. Monitor the progress of OJT contracts, preferably through on-site visits.

SDAs that monitored the progress of OJT contracts tended to provide substantially higher quality OJT services. Monitoring can help resolve problems with a participant's performance and can help participants acquire appropriate world of work skills. Monitoring can also help ensure that the employer is providing the training for which JTPA is paying.

These recommendations to improve the quality of OJT services all require that SDAs or providers play a greater role in matching participants to appropriate OJT jobs, in shaping the training provided and in setting appropriate contract terms. These practices will likely increase the cost of OJT services. However, the alternative laissez faire approach is too vulnerable to the idiosyncrasies of individual employer's training practices, resulting often in poor quality training and occasionally in a total waste of resources. This evaluation found substantial evidence that the more active approach can increase the quality of OJT in JTPA.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF JTPA TRAINING

OVERVIEW

This study examined how the design and implementation of JTPA services has influenced the quality of the training provided to JTPA participants, using case examples from fifteen different SDAs and 43 different training programs throughout the United States. The recommendations summarized in this chapter are intended to identify how actions at the federal, state, and SDA levels can improve the effectiveness of JTPA training in placing JTPA participants in quality jobs and improving their future employability.

When we began this study, we identified an ongoing tension in JTPA program objectives between producing trained workers for high-skilled occupations in demand in local labor markets, and addressing the severe employment barriers of the hardest-to-serve individuals within the JTPA eligible population in each locality. Faced with limited funding, most SDAs have resolved this tension by developing a diverse set of training options. Thus, in most SDAs, some training is oriented towards job seekers with relatively high levels of educational attainment and/or employment experience and other services are oriented towards job seekers with limited or unstable employment histories, or limited basic educational competencies.

SDAs and service providers face a special kind of challenge in designing services that will be responsive to the needs of adults with basic skills deficiencies or multiple employment barriers. Frequently conflicting constraints include:

- the need of these individuals for intensive services versus their inability to support themselves during an extended period of classroom training;

- the need for upgrading of basic educational skills to improve employability, versus a frequent lack of client interest in training in an academic setting;

- the need for occupational training specially oriented to the limited basic skills levels of these clients, versus the scarcity of such training in the community.

In applying the criteria for quality training, we examined whether the training programs selected for study delivered training that improved clients' occupational skills and enabled JTPA participants to locate and retain better jobs. The ultimate criterion applied to all training programs, therefore, was whether the JTPA investment created "added value" -- that is, whether the training was substantial and appropriate enough to make a difference in participants' employment opportunities.

The recommendations on improving the quality of JTPA training have been organized into two groups: actions that can be undertaken at the federal and state levels to provide policy direction and leadership, and actions that require changes in policies and practices at the SDA and service provider levels. Some of the recommendations suggested below are intended to improve the overall effectiveness of JTPA training for all participants; other recommendations focus on how to improve the effectiveness of JTPA training for hard-to-serve groups.

FEDERAL AND STATE ROLES IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TRAINING

Although many of the improvements in the design and delivery of JTPA training can be accomplished through actions at the SDA and service provider levels, there are several areas in which increased federal or state leadership would be beneficial. Recommendation 1 discusses the need to clarify the purpose of on-the-job training, and to educate SDAs, service providers, and employers about the appropriate objectives of this mode of training. Recommendations 2 through 4 address the need to clarify federal and state goals about serving hard-to-serve clients and

to have DOL and states play a leadership role in promoting services that are effective with individuals with serious barriers to employment.

1. Help clarify the purpose of on-the-job training. Federal and/or state leadership is needed to clarify that the purpose of on-the-job training is to train OJT participants in specific occupational skills, rather than just to "buy" participants a job. One third of the SDAs in our sample viewed the purpose of OJT payments as a bribe to employers to hire disadvantaged workers, rather than as a mechanism for providing training to these workers.

2. Clarify program priorities regarding the emphasis to be placed on serving hard-to-serve individuals through the JTPA program. Not all SDAs have designed programs to respond to the employment barriers experienced by adult dropouts, individuals with functional limitations in basic skills, and individuals with unstable work histories. If DOL or a state government wants to increase the emphasis on serving the least job ready among the JTPA-eligible population, explicit goals at the federal or state level are needed.

3. Promote the design of service packages that are responsive to the needs of hard-to-serve groups. In terms of program design elements, the response to the needs of adults with basic skills limitations or other substantial employment barriers should include opportunities for individuals to upgrade their basic skills and to obtain occupational skills through integrated basic skills/occupational skills training programs. Preference should be given to vocationally oriented basic skills instruction, and to programs that integrate basic skills training and occupational skills training curricula.

The federal government and state governments should both play leadership roles in promoting the development and dissemination of service models that enable individuals with substantial employment barriers to achieve high quality placements and improved long-term employability.

4. Promote integrated linkages between JTPA training and work programs for welfare recipients. In some areas current work-welfare linkages are enabling SDAs to provide an enriched package of pre-employment services to welfare recipients. However in many locations, current practices have resulted in the design of two separate vocational service systems without linking the preemployment services supported by welfare funds with occupational training provided by the JTPA system. The implementation of the federal JOBS program should provide an opportunity for the federal government and states to pursue a closer integration of the JTPA service system and the vocational services provided to JOBS participants.

SDA AND SERVICE PROVIDER ROLES IN IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF TRAINING

The remaining recommendations for improving the quality of JTPA training create a detailed agenda for SDA action, requiring close coordination with service providers. Recommendations 1 through 4 address the delivery of the front-end services of assessment and individual service planning, as well as the provision of on-going case management services. Recommendations 5 to 12 focus on the design and delivery of classroom training. Recommendations 13 through 18 relate to the design and implementation of on-the-job training programs.

Recommendations to Improve SDA System-Level Functions

1. Assess basic skills using detailed objective measures during intake into JTPA services. Appropriate detailed assessments should be performed both for applicants interested in entering occupational classroom training and applicants interested in on-the-job training or direct placement services. These assessments should be used not only to determine whether an applicant has the necessary prerequisites for a specific training program, but to identify employability barriers, such as basic skills functional limitations, and to design a comprehensive service package to overcome these barriers.

2. Assess vocational interest and vocational aptitudes and help applicants explore career options. Increased career exploration can improve the match between trainee interests and aptitudes and JTPA training for individuals who have limited employment experience as well as for those who want to make a career change but are unsure of what kind of job or training they want. These front-end services should help improve the appropriateness of the job match for OJT participants and direct placement clients, as well as the appropriateness of the training match for participants in classroom training.

3. Provide pre-employment services as part of a comprehensive service package, especially for individuals with limited employment experience or unstable work histories. If more detailed assessments of applicants' work histories and employability barriers were obtained at JTPA intake, SDAs could identify individuals who could benefit from job search skills and/or world-of-work skills training, and could make sure that this training was made available to the applicant as an integrated part of his/her services. We found that employment outcomes were often jeopardized by the failure to address a need for world-of-work training.

4. Promote use of case management techniques particularly for JTPA participants in long training programs, or participants receiving several services to address multiple employment barriers. While formal case management is not a necessary mechanism for every SDA or every training program, it appeared to be particularly advantageous in the case study SDAs that used it to keep track of individuals who were enrolled in long-term training at community colleges or to keep track of the progress of OJT participants. Periodic (bi-weekly or monthly) contacts between a JTPA counselor and the client can address problems that might interfere with successful program completion as they arise, and can keep track of the progress of the trainee in mastering the training curriculum. Case management would also be important if a client was receiving services from more than one provider either sequentially or concurrently, to ensure that the combined services were being coordinated.

Recommendations to Improve the Design and Delivery of Classroom Training

5. Use JTPA dollars to actively shape the design of local training programs to be more responsive to the needs of JTPA participants. A number of SDAs are spending the majority of their JTPA training funds to purchase training for JTPA clients in existing educational institutions without shaping the design of the local training curricula. Especially if a national policy increasing the emphasis on serving individuals with basic skills limitations is implemented, SDAs will need to use their training resources more strategically to influence the design and availability of training appropriate for JTPA clients.

In several of the SDAs visited, joint involvement of SDA staff and provider staff in curriculum planning had led to refinements of existing training curricula to make them more appropriate for JTPA participants. In other locations, service providers had designed training programs specifically with JTPA participants in mind.

6. Encourage service providers to develop and offer training options that integrate basic skills training and occupational training. As the JTPA program moves toward providing more services to those with basic skills deficiencies, it will have to address these needs. Programs that integrate basic skills training with occupational content both are more palatable to clients and have better prospects for producing basic skill improvements that will improve job performance.

7. Review the realism of each program's occupational goals and the relevance of its curriculum given the local labor market. The SDA should ensure that the jobs being trained for are available in the local community and that the content of the course is a good match to employer requirements. There are potential problems both with courses that are too thin to produce the skills needed to obtain stable employment in good jobs and with courses that teach much more than is used in any of the local jobs available. Although it is not bad to train JTPA clients to the level of the "next job," there were quite a few cases where

cases where classroom training content was simply not relevant to jobs in the local area.

8. Review the validity of program entrance requirements. The rationale for entrance requirements into classroom training was often unclear. SDAs should make sure that the entrance requirements are neither unduly restrictive, so that getting into the program becomes an unnecessary employment barrier, nor so lenient that many participants are assigned to a program within which they have little chance of success.

9. Require classroom training providers to submit a comprehensive skill-based set of curriculum objectives. This requirement would serve to emphasize the fact that JTPA is supporting training that imparts occupational skills to its clients. A comprehensive set of objectives written in terms of skills to be learned (competencies) would clarify program goals, permitting a more thorough review of program content. It would also provide a useful tool for the assessment and assignment process since the person advising the client could show him or her exactly what would be learned in the course.

10. Monitor classroom instruction to check on the appropriateness of methods used and the quality of instruction. Most classroom instructors have never been observed by anyone from the SDA. Although the SDA's function does not include involvement in the details of instruction, it should have knowledge of the nature of the training offered and the level of instruction. In addition to keeping the SDA better informed, such visits would have value in motivating providers to self-monitor the quality of instruction within their programs.

11. Pay more attention to the appropriateness of the placements being made at the conclusion of occupational classroom training. In the cases studied, SDAs did not always monitor the quality or appropriateness of the jobs into which trainees were placed at the conclusion of occupational classroom training. Service providers responsible for training and placement are often not experienced at the job development

process, and have financial incentives to make a quick placement in the first "training related" job that comes along. We found many cases of gross mismatches, such as clients completing rigorous computer/clerical courses only to be placed in "training related" jobs as phone answerers. By evaluating the match between job skill requirements and skills provided in classroom training, the SDA would have grounds for deciding whether the courses are unnecessarily rigorous or the provider is insufficiently selective in making placements. The JTPA system would benefit from improved placement practices to ensure that the best possible placement was made for each training program graduate.

Recommendations to Improve the Design and Implementation of On-the-Job Training

12. Clarify the purpose of OJT contracts to service providers as well as employers. In our discussions with OJT service providers and local employers, it was clear that many did not understand that the OJT subsidy was to compensate employers for training the participant.

13. Do not encourage employer-initiated reverse referrals for OJT positions. In many cases, this practice resulted in employers being subsidized for hiring individuals that they would have hired anyway, even without the OJT subsidy.

14. Specify the skills to be learned in the OJT contract. Contracts that specify the skills that the participant is to learn help focus both the participant and the employer on the fact that the OJT contract is for training. We found that SDAs where OJT contracts specified the skills to be learned more often provided high quality training to OJT participants.

15. Link the terms of OJT contracts to characteristics of participants and jobs. If the amount of OJT subsidy were more closely related to the amount of training provided, it is likely that JTPA resources would be more effectively used.

16. Take a more active role in shaping the content of OJT training. If SDAs or service providers worked more closely with employers in designing the content and delivery of on-the-job training, the quality of the training provided could be improved in many cases. Elements of training that should be identified include the skills to be imparted, the logical sequence of training topics, who will provide the training, and the schedule of interactive training versus independent practice. For other employers, more detailed assistance in defining the skills to be imparted and determining a logical sequence of training topics will be needed.

17. Monitor the progress of OJT contracts, preferably through on-site visits. Monitoring appeared to resolve problems with on-the-job performance and to improve job retention. Monitoring of OJT contracts was also used effectively in several SDAs to ensure that the training specified in the contract is being provided by the employer.

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APPENDIX A

Criteria Indicating Quality Training

APPENDIX A

Criteria Indicating Quality Training

1. **Client Recruitment, Selection, and Assignment to Services**

   a. The SDA has a clear set of goals about what groups it would like to serve.

   b. The SDA has a clear strategy about how to achieve its client goals.

   c. SDA staff members work to further SDA client goals and priorities in appropriate ways through their responsibilities for client outreach and intake.

   d. Particular service provider staff work to further SDA client goals and priorities in appropriate ways through their responsibilities for outreach and intake.

   e. SDA and/or service provider staff assess applicant strengths and weaknesses in order to develop a service plan and employment goals appropriate for each applicant.

   f. Applicants are directed to the particular services or projects that are most appropriate to their individual circumstances.

   g. Applicants not appropriate for JTPA-funded services are referred to other community resources for more preparation or for alternate services.

2. Program Design and Management

a. The SDA has a clear set of goals about what services it wants to provide, based on an assessment of the needs of the applicant population.

b. The SDA retains enough control over the service design and implementation process to ensure that its service priorities are met by its service providers.

c. The SDA offers a varied range of services to meet the varied needs of the full range of JTPA-eligible applicants.

d. The SDA selects service providers that are sensitive to and responsive to the particular training needs of JTPA clients.

e. The SDA provides training in occupations that offer local job opportunities through labor market expansion and turnover.

f. The SDA and its service providers offer training that is oriented towards "high quality jobs", either through immediate job qualities (high pay, good benefits) or through opportunities for rapid career advancement.

g. The SDA designs individual projects or sequences of services that address the full range of an individual's employment barriers (e.g. basic skills remediation, plus occupational skills training, plus necessary supportive services).

h. The SDA makes appropriate use of each of the employment-oriented types of training it offers. Each type of training (i.e. pre-employment training and job search training; basic skills training; on-the-job occupational training; classroom occupational training; customized training) is offered in sufficient intensity to assist participants in increasing their employment potential, either individually or in combination with other types of training.

i. The SDA establishes performance expectations for its service providers that encourage quality service and quality outcomes, or at least do not discourage training intensity and quality.

j. The SDA oversees service provider performance in order to identify weaknesses in service quality and suggest corrective action.

3. Provision of Training

a. Particular training projects have clear skills training objectives and employment goals for participants.

b. Particular training projects enroll participants that are appropriate for the project.

c. Particular training curricula meet the needs and skills levels of clients.

d. Particular training curricula meet the needs of prospective employers.

e. To the extent possible, particular training projects:

-- present the curriculum content in a logical developmental sequence

-- present training content that is relevant to the jobs for which JTPA participants are being trained

-- make the job-relevance of the training clear to the trainees

-- utilize a curriculum that is matched to the learners' level (i.e. adapted to the skills deficiencies and employability barriers of JTPA participants)

-- stress "training for transfer", that is, training in how to apply the particular knowledge or skill in a variety of work environments

-- stress active rather than passive learning

-- respond to the cultural and language barriers of JTPA participants, and adapt to student needs as expressed by feedback in the classroom

-- spend class time effectively, focusing on the task at hand

-- include systematic meaningful evaluation of student progress

-- coordinate occupational skills training with basic skills remediation

-- coordinate skills training with the delivery of needed supportive services

-- coordinate skills training with the job development/job placement process.

4. Job Placement Policies and Practices

a. The SDA and/or service provider has a clear placement goal and placement strategy for each participant.

b. Job development and job placement activities are adequate to further placement goals.

c. Job matches take into account employer needs, client skills levels, and client employment goals.

d. Job placements build on the skills acquired during training.

e. Job placements emphasize quality outcomes: high wages, good benefit packages, and opportunities for stable employment with the opportunity for advancement.

5. Employment Outcomes

a. Participants are assisted in obtaining the highest quality job appropriate to their level of employability.

b. Participants are assisted in obtaining jobs consistent with the employment goals established in their EDP.

c. Participants who want full-time employment are placed in full-time jobs.

d. As many placements as possible are made to jobs paying substantially above the minimum wage, or above an appropriate indicator of the prevailing local wage for the occupation in which training occurred.

e. As many placements as possible are made to jobs offering attractive fringe benefits, including health insurance.

f. When possible, placements are made to jobs offering opportunities for advancement on the job.

g. For JTPA participants receiving welfare benefits, a real effort is made to assist individuals to obtain jobs that will give them a financial reason to prefer employment to welfare.

APPENDIX B

Matrix of Study Topics by Data Sources

APPENDIX B

Matrix of Study Topics by Data Sources

TOPIC	DATA SOURCE													
	1. APPLC FOCUS GROUPS	2. PART FOCUS GROUPS	3. SDA STAFF INTRV	4. SERV PROV INTRV	5. TRAINER INTRV	6. SDA OBSERV	7. TRAINING OBSERV	8. CASE FILE REV	9. TRAINER INTS RE: TERMINEES	10. TERMINEE INTRV	11. EMPL INTRV	12. CURRI-CULUM REV	13. SDA DOC REV	14. SDA/SERV PROV STATS REV
I. Client Recruitment and Selection; Client Assessment and Assignment to Services														
Annual volume of participants served (by sample project and by SDA)			X	X										X
Characteristics of participants served (by project and by SDA)			X	X										X
Client goals: priority groups; client philosophy; who can benefit from JTPA in local community? (SDA and project levels)			X	X									X	
Strategy for client outreach/recruitment (SDA and project level)			X	X										
Description of recruitment activities (SDA and project level)			X	X		X								
Allocation of responsibility for outreach, intake, assessment and assignment to services between SDA and service providers			X	X										
Content and timing of orientation to JTPA	X		X	X		X								
Content and timing of orientation to project			X	X										
What service choices are offered to applicants	X		X	X		X								
How service plans are developed; how clients are matched to services			X	X		X								
How employment goals are established for each client			X	X		X								
Client assessment practices (at SDA and service provider level)			X	X		X		X						
Criteria used for enrollment decisions			X	X									X	

APPENDIX B (continued)

TOPIC	1. APPLC FOCUS GROUPS	2. PART FOCUS GROUPS	3. SDA STAFF INTRV	4. SERV PROV INTRV	5. TRAINER INTRV	6. SDA OBSERV	7. TRAINING OBSERV	8. CASE FILE REV	9. TRAINER INTS RE: TERMINEES	10. TERMINEE INTRV	11. EMPL INTRV	12. CURRI-CULUM REV	13. SDA DOC REV	14. SDA/SERV PROV STATS REV
How basic skills deficiencies influence client selection; if enrolled, how basic skills deficiencies are addressed			X	X	X			X	X					
Applicant/enrollee ratio for JTPA or for specific project			X	X										X
Client satisfaction with pre-enrollment or pre-training services	X	X												
2. Program Design and Management Practices														
Service goals (SDA and service provider levels)			X	X										
SDA allocation of resources to different services (pre-employment/job search; YEC-oriented services for youth; basic skills training; OJT; occupational classroom training; customized training)			X										X	
Average duration and cost of different service options; appropriateness of this intensity for increasing long term employability			X	X									X	
Supportive services available; extent of utilization		X	X	X				X					X	
How extent of supportive services influences the training offered by service providers				X	X									
SDA versus service provider roles in designing range of services and content of specific services			X	X	X									
Criteria for selecting service providers; description of range of providers			X										X	
How occupational training areas were selected; description of range of occupations in which training is available			X	X									X	
How occupational training areas relate to labor market opportunities			X	X									X	
Level of applicant interest in various training areas	X		X	X										

APPENDIX B (continued)

TOPIC	1. APPLC FOCUS GROUPS	2. PART FOCUS GROUPS	3. SDA STAFF INTRV	4. SERV PROV INTRV	5. TRAINER INTRV	6. SDA OBSERV	7. TRAINING OBSERV	8. CASE FILE REV	9. TRAINER INTS RE: TERMINEES	10. TERMINEE INTRV	11. EMPL INTRV	12. CURRI-CULUM REV	13. SDA DOC REV	14. SDA/SERV PROV STATS REV
How occupational training areas fit the extent of formal education, extent of employment experience, etc of range of JTPA applicants and enrollees	X		X	X				X	X					
Extent to which various training areas are oriented towards "high quality" jobs: types of participants for whom those training areas are intended			X	X	X									
Extent to which services are integrated or can be coordinated or sequenced for individuals requiring more than one type of service (SDA and service provider level)			X	X	X							X		
How performance expectations are communicated to providers; consequences of failure to perform at the required level			X	X	X									
How performance levels are set for providers: relation to SDA performance standards			X	X									X	
How required performance levels and contract terms influence the training offered by service providers				X	X									
SDA monitoring practices to ensure quality performance by providers			X	X	X									
3. Provision of Training														
(To be asked at SDA level about basic skills training, ojt, and job search training. To be asked at service provider level about the full range of services available to participants in a given occupational training track in the three sample providers)														
Placement of specific training project within service provider organization; influence of agency mission on this project			X	X										
Skills training objectives			X	X	X								X	
Job placement objectives (or linkage to employment-related services, if pre-employment or basic skills related)			X		X								X	

APPENDIX B (continued)

TOPIC	1. APPLC FOCUS GROUPS	2. PART FOCUS GROUPS	3. SDA STAFF INTRV	4. SERV PROV INTRV	5. TRAINER INTRV	6. SDA OBSERV	7. TRAINING OBSERV	8. CASE FILE REV	9. TRAINER INTS RE: TERMINEES	10. TERMINEE INTRV	11. EMPL INTRV	12. CURRI-CULUM REV	13. SDA DOC REV	14. SDA/SERV PROV STATS REV
Instructional environment of training site (eg group vs. individual instruction; extent to which training simulates job environment)				X			X					X		
Curriculum features					X		X					X		
--duration of training --intensity of training (hours per day) --content emphases --sequence of topics in curriculum --occupational relevance of content --sensitivity of curriculum to special needs of JTPA participants --whether "training for transfer" is emphasized														
Instructional Techniques					X		X					X		
--mix of methods (eg lecture, discussion, peer teaching) --whether active or passive learning is emphasized --whether systematic evaluation is used														
Staff qualifications		X		X	X					X				
Ancillary or support services offered as part of skills training curriculum (eg grooming, money management, counseling, job search skills training)					X							X		
Coordination between basic skills remediation and occupational skills instruction			X	X	X			X				X		
Coordination between occupational skills instruction and job placement services			X	X	X			X				X		
Extent of "fit" between enrolled clients and curriculum and placement objectives of project				X	X			X		X				X
Extent of "fit" between curriculum and needs of local employers hiring in that occupational area					X			X	X		X			
Client satisfaction with skills training		X								X				

APPENDIX B (continued)

TOPIC	1. APPLC FOCUS GROUPS	2. PART FOCUS GROUPS	3. SDA STAFF INTRV	4. SERV PROV INTRV	5. TRAINER INTRV	6. SDA OBSERV	7. TRAINING OBSERV	8. CASE FILE REV	9. TRAINER INTS RE: TERMINEES	10. TERMINEE INTRV	11. EMPL INTRV	12. CURRI-CULUM REV	13. SDA DOC REV	14. SDA/SERV PROV STATS REV
4. Job Placement Policies and Practices														
Allocation of responsibility for employer outreach, job development, and job placement between SDA and service provider			X	X	X									
How program is marketed to employers			X	X	X									
How specific trainees are marketed to employers; how job match is made			X	X	X				X					
Role of program staff in negotiating terms of employment for JTPA trainees			X	X	X				X					
Role of program staff in troubleshooting problems that may arise after hiring			X	X	X				X					
Extent of reliance on trainee to do own job search			X	X	X				X					
Employer perceptions of advantages, disadvantages of hiring JTPA trainees					X						X			
Relation between skills required on the job and skills obtained during JTPA training									X	X	X			
Client satisfaction with placement-related services										X				
5. Employment Outcomes														
Client satisfaction with first job										X				
Client satisfaction with subsequent jobs										X				
Client wages at JTPA termination								X	X	X				X
Client wage increases after JTPA termination								X		X				X
Fringe benefits at JTPA termination									X	X				X
Fringe benefits after JTPA termination										X				
Job advancement after JTPA termination										X				
Welfare reduction outcomes after JTPA termination										X				X

APPENDIX C

Summary of Program Design Features Oriented to Hard-to-Serve Clients

APPENDIX C:

Summary of Program Design Features Oriented to Hard-to-Serve Clients in the 15 Case Study SDAs

SDA	
A	In response to an applicant pool that is educationally deficient, this SDA offers basic skills training as a "stand-alone" service, and as an integrated part of occupational skills curricula. Service mix emphasizes classroom training; persons with 6th grade reading and math levels can qualify for classroom training. A separate contract offers counseling to hard-to-serve individuals to overcome barriers to JTPA participation. SDA addresses childcare and transportation needs with supportive services.
B	Most funds go to an in-school youth program operated by the school district that targets youth functioning two or more grade levels below norms. Adults may receive basic skills remediation through 8% funds (though this is mostly channelled to inmates of minimum security prisons). High school diploma or GED required for most classroom training. Token supportive services allowances are available for transportation and childcare.
C	Program goal is to serve groups in proportion to population incidence. SDA monitors participation by different groups and cooperates with community based organizations to generate referrals from particular groups, such as Hispanics, Southeast Asians, youth substance abusers, ex-offenders, and older workers. SDA requires clients to complete GED before entering occupational classroom training, but, otherwise, basic skills remediation is not a big emphasis. OJT is used for essentially job ready clients. Most clients not entering classroom training receive only a 3 day job search seminar and a two hour career development workshop. Work experience with a public or non-profit agency is available for adults without recent work experience. No needs-based payments are available through JTPA funding.
D	SDA goals are to watch to make sure that nothing is preventing any group from accessing JTPA services, and then serve "whoever comes in the door." Individuals with basic skills deficiencies are referred to Learning Center (funded with 8% funds) for computer-based training prior to referral to occupational training. Classroom training appears to be reserved for individuals with high school diploma or GED. Most participants get on-the-job training. Supportive services are not available unless individuals are enrolled in special program for welfare participants.

E Individuals without high school diploma or GED are unlikely to access classroom training; dropouts are channeled to OJT or computerized GED training. Lots of welfare recipients with high school diploma attend long-term (1 - 2 yr.) classroom training at community college. Needs based payment of $20 per week for classroom training participants were recently deleted.

F Program design isn't well suited to the needs of hard-to-serve applicants. The largest service component -- classroom training -- requires a high school diploma or GED, plus tenth grade reading and math skills. Other options include a pre-employment curriculum in basic educational skills and life skills, funded with 8% funds, and on-the-job training. Individuals who are interested in classroom training, and who need remedial upgrading can receive up to 5 months of basic skills remediation at public schools or community colleges prior to entering occupational classroom training.

G This SDA states groups "most in need" in its plan, but says they serve "whoever walks in the door." Most participants receive on-the-job training. However, classroom training is not reserved for those with high school diplomas or GED: there are occupational skills training curricula in welding, food service, and nurses assistant that are oriented towards participants with at least a 6th grade reading and math level, and curricula in electronics assembly for those with a 7th grade reading and math level. Ninth grade level skills are required for clerical skills training. Other service options include survival skills training and job development, and, starting in Program Year 1989, basic skills remediation for adults. Needs-based payments and day care are available to classroom training participants.

H Program states goal of equitable service levels to women, dropouts, and youth, but has recruitment difficulties for each of these groups. On-the-job training is the largest service component. Most classroom training requires 9th grade reading and math levels. Adult basic skills training is available through 8% funded services from public providers, but this training is not aggressively marketed to individuals with basic skills deficiencies. One classroom training provider (a high school) has developed integrated basic skills and occupational skills curricula in food service, maintenance, and welding. Small amounts of needs-based payments, transportation assistance, and child care are available to support participants in classroom training.

I All dropouts are required to return to high school or obtain GED as prerequisite of occupational skills training. Special projects for dropouts, potential dropouts. SDA serves above-average proportions of females, minorities, dropouts, and welfare recipients in classroom training. SDA tries to link on-the-job training to classroom training. SDA emphasizes leveraging welfare funds and Pell grants for child care and subsistence; provides transportation assistance directly.

J SDA does not offer basic skills remediation for adults (an adult Remedial Center was planned for PY89); classroom training is reserved for those with good academic skills and ability to support self during training. Individuals with greatest employment barriers receive only job search assistance, and are enrolled only after client has found a job. Child care assistance and transportation to out-of-county training is available. Small stipends are available to participants in classroom training.

K High unemployment and economic dislocation have resulted in an applicant pool in this SDA which is increasingly made up of women (to supplement family incomes). The SDA's contractor serves all JTPA eligible applicants. Both on-the-job training and classroom training are available. Those testing under 6th grade reading level are assigned a tutor prior to entering classroom training. If reading or math scores are between 6th and 8th grade levels, counselor encourages the applicant to take basic skills remediation concurrently with an occupational skills training curriculum. On-the-job training and classroom training are often used simultaneously or sequentially. Up to $300 in supportive services are available per client.

L Youth programming is offered at four drop-out prevention centers operated by the school districts. The SDA staff feel they cannot offer basic skills remediation to adults with JTPA funds, since there is no adult competency standard. Several new class-size occupational classroom training programs are trying to recruit those without GEDs for linked occupational training/GED preparation curricula. Otherwise, classroom training is reserved for those with GED and no basic skills deficiencies. Those with the greatest employment barriers are limited to a three week Job Club program. No supportive services are available to JTPA participants.

M SDA does little targeting to hard-to-serve clients. PIC wants the most placements for the least cost. No basic skills remediation is available for adults except for one provider which has developed some combined basic skills and occupational skills training curricula (which serve mostly youth). Most participants receive on-the-job training, which includes a three-day pre-employment curriculum. Classroom training is discouraged, unless applicant has no employable skills, then it is minimum length necessary to place in job. Child care allowance and transportation reimbursement are available for classroom training participants. No needs-based payments are offered.

N The SDA says it is committed to equitable service to different population segments and has started to develop programs to respond to some applicants with special needs. Special projects serve individuals with disabilities (funded with JTPA funds) and the homeless (funded with non-JTPA funds). Childcare was recently added as a supportive services to enable the SDA to serve single parents. However, no basic skills training or ESL is offered for those with major skills deficiencies. The major classroom training provider (a community college) does its own recruitment, screening for appropriate reading/math level, and enrollment. GED is not a prerequisite for access to occupational classroom training. A special classroom training contract was developed to provide hotel training to very hard-to-serve individuals. Some hard-to-serve individuals are referred directly to jobs, using Job Service listings.

O This SDA has designed its services to meet the needs of the JTPA eligible population, 50% of whom are high school dropouts. The program reserves both on-the-job training and classroom training for those with less than five years work experience. Individuals with more extensive work histories can receive only directly placement assistance. Other service options include combined basic skills remediation and work experience, combined basic skills remediation and occupational classroom training, occupational classroom training, on-the-job training. OJT is generally for those with the least employment barriers, unless an individual with basic skills deficiencies is unwilling to participate in classroom training. Classroom training in four areas -- warehouse worker, nurse assistant, custodial, and hospitality -- are available for individuals with less than 7th grade reading level. For occupational classroom training only, some classes are available to individuals testing at the 7th to 9th grade reading levels, and some to individuals with at least a 9th grade reading level. Supportive services include transportation assistance, day care, and needs-based payments.